

# Wolfgang Stoerchle

Curator Alice Dusapin

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Contemporary art centre of Ivry – le Crédac, from 9 April until 10 July  
2022.

## Press release :

Wolfgang Stoerchle was a little-known artist who worked in Southern California during the 1970s. His life story, or at least the many rumors about it, have given the reception of his work a particular aura. Born in Baden Baden, Germany, in 1944, Stoerchle moved to Canada in 1959. Three years later he crossed the U.S. on horseback until reaching Los Angeles. He studied at the University of Oklahoma and then UC Santa Barbara, and became the first professor of video art at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in 1970. His teaching left a deep mark on his students, among them David Salle, Paul McCarthy, Matt Mullican and James Welling. He did some of his most emblematic performances during this period, and made a series of videos showing him in his studio. In October 1975, he did his last performance in John Baldessari's studio. He died in a car accident a few months later, at the age of 32.

On the occasion of the publication of the first monograph devoted to him, *Wolfgang Stoerchle, Success in Failure*, written by Alice Dusapin, the *Crédakino* in the Crédac is presenting a selection of videos he made in 1970-72 using a Portapak camera, as well as his last video, *Sue Turning*, shot in a film studio in 1973.

Alice Dusapin

## Full checklist :

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Photo credits for all the images :

« Photo : Marc Domage / le Crédac, 2022. »

## SHOWN ON A MONITOR

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*Dodging*, 1972 black&white sound video, 3 min 24 s

*Lunch*, 1972 black&white sound video, 3 min 46 s

*Jumping in the Air*, c. 1970-1972 black&white sound video, 3 min 28 s

In the summer of 1970, just after Stoerchle graduated from the University of Santa Barbara (USCB), Allan Kaprow invited him to join the newly constituted CalArts faculty. He taught video and performance there until 1972. Among the many tools the school put at his disposition, Stoerchle was particularly interested in the Portapak, a new light and easy-to-use video camera made by Sony. With it he made several dozen short videos in his studio, with himself as the only actor, moving around in front of a stationary camera hooked up to a monitor so that he could watch himself in real time and adjust his actions accordingly – running in darkness, jumping, undressing while crawling, waiting, rolling around, eating lunch, etc. He wanted to use as body as a simple tool with no psychological dimension while trying, sometimes unsuccessfully, to perform basic acts.

## SCREENING

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*Sue Turning*, 1973 Vidéo, noir et blanc, son, 12 min 10 s

During the summer of 1973, Stoerchle took part in a "Dance/Television" workshop involving dancers and video artists at the American Dance Festival organized by the choreographer Allegra Fuller Snyder. Finally given a film crew and access to an editing studio, he made *Sue Turning*, a video whose production values and structure represented a rupture with his previous work. It was to be his last. Instead of foregrounding his own body, this time he featured Carolyn Pfaffl, a dancer also known as Sue, who stood on a revolving platform while three stationary cameras filmed her from head to foot. The sound track consists of Stoerchle's voice in the background as he gives instructions to the technicians and tells Sue what postures to adopt and motions to make. The result is a kind of deep dive into the artist's mind as we see and hear him direct this dance that, ironically, involves very little motion. The process of the production of this video becomes its real subject.

## PHOTO

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*Self-portrait (levitating)*, c. 1970  
Photography, Santa Barbara.