

NINA FISCHER & MAROAN EL SANI

Fernsehturm – Panorama Berlin [speeded up society – slowed down back again], 1997

59:32:00

© The artists, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

This video work by Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani is a long take of one complete rotation of the revolving restaurant in Berlin's TV tower from the perspective of a fixed camera. During East German times, the restaurant made one rotation per hour. After German reunification and the introduction of Western capitalism, the speed of the revolving restaurant was doubled, taking only 30 minutes per rotation. Through slow motion, the work *Fernsehturm – Panorama Berlin [speeded up society – slowed down back again]* extends the restaurant's current speed of 30 minutes back to its original speed, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, of 60 minutes per rotation.

Nina Fischer [*1965 in Emden / Germany, lives in Berlin] and **Maroan el Sani** [*1966 in Duisburg / Germany, lives in Berlin] have worked together since 1995. In their photographic and filmic stagings, installations, and interventions, the artists explore the invisible history of distinctive locations and question their significance for the past, present, and future. Their attention focuses on transitional situations, such as those depicted by the decay or conversion of buildings that are representative of various political and social structures.

ASTRID HEIBACH

I Did It, 1990

12:29:00

© The artist, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

In *I Did It*, Astrid Heibach offers a fictional and humorous portrayal of the hyperbolic reality of the “American way of life” using the famous New York City Marathon as an example. The artist herself embodies a woman who comes to the United States to fulfill her parents’ instruction to give everything and make the best of herself. By incorporating excerpts from conversations with residents of the city and historical references, the popular myth is constantly critically scrutinized.

Astrid Heibach [*1949 in Düsseldorf / Germany, lives in Cologne] has worked with photography, Super 8 film, and video since the early 1970s. Between 1986 and 1987, Heibach studied in New York. In her practice, she often defamiliarizes the myth of the American dream through irony, combining performance and video to critically deconstruct stereotypes and clichés. Her narrative works are characterized by a socio-critical examination of the medium of video itself. Together with Gábor Bódy, Veruschka Bódy, and Gusztáv Hámos, Astrid Heibach co-founded the first international video magazine, *Infermental* [1982–1991], in Berlin.

K. H. HÖDICKE WITH CORNELIA BALCEROWIAK & HELMUT WIETZ

Made in New York, 1974

25:15:00

© The artists, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

Many of K. H. Hödicke's experimental short films were produced during his stay in New York from 1966 to 1967 and reflect his experiences in the metropolis. The cinematic essay *Made in New York* follows a narrative structure and was shot in 1974 in collaboration with the filmmakers Cornelia Balcerowiak and Helmut Wietz. The narration unfolds around a seemingly complex diagram describing how baby alligators are imported into the U.S. and supposedly end up "animating" New York's sewer system for many years. A walk in the streets of New York among steaming manhole covers that relate the otherwise out-of-sight sewer system with the street-level invokes a discussion about the New York "underground." An unsuccessful alligator hunt in the end of the film is dramatized through a sound composition by iconic artist and musician Conny Schnitzler. The film is an allegory on the urban myth about alligators in the city's sewer system and is mixed with allusions to Thomas Pynchon's novel *V.* that was published in 1963. This film is one of the first n.b.k. Video-Forum co-productions.

K. H. Hödicke [*1938 in Nuremberg / Germany, lives in Berlin] is known as a representative of New Figuration and a pioneer of German Neo-Expressionism. In the 1960s, he created his first multiples, process-oriented sculptures, and object art. During a stay in the United States at the end of the 1960s, he began to work intensively with the technical possibilities of film and video, developing a series of experimental short films.

KEN KOBLAND

Berlin/nilreB: Tourist Journal, 1988

19:00:00

© The artist, Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix [EAI], New York.

“It’s a letter to Berlin; a graveyard meditation [with The Wall as its marker]. I spent eight months in Berlin [West] as a DAAD fellow; a true guest worker, in 1986–87. I wanted to respond in some way to this strange place. I wanted to describe the landscape of Cold War Berlin, which immediately means dichotomy and invoking the imaginary; the landscape that isn’t there as well as the one that is. The only spoken text in the tape are a segment of the John F. Kennedy ‘Ich bin ein Berliner’ speech, given at the Berlin Wall in 1962, and fragments of radio news reports, from both DDR and Bundesrepublik broadcasts.”

— Ken Kobland

Ken Kobland [*1946 in New York, lives in New York] has been producing independent film and video works since the 1970s, including collaborative projects with the experimental theater company The Wooster Group. Through metaphor, provocation, and association, Kobland often explores the historical meaning, critical context, and received notions of a particular site or place.

KEN KOBLAND

ARISE! Walk Dog Eat Donut, 1999

29:35:00

© The artist, Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix [EAI], New York.

“Footage shot from the New York IRT and the Berlin S-Bahn are shifted and shuffled, interpenetrating in space and time with enthralling dexterity, leaving us ‘adrift between the familiar and the strange,’ while personal diary entries, a Russian ballad and dubbed dialogue from *8 1/2* are rehearsed to conjure a sense of futility and impasse in the mundane rituals of daily life.”

— New York Video Festival where *Arise! Walk Dog Eat Donut* premiered in the summer of 1999

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GORDON MATTA-CLARK

The Wall, 1976

15:04:00

© The Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark, Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix [EAI], New York.

This newly assembled work is a rare document of a 1976 Matta-Clark performance in Berlin. The piece begins with the following statement: “In 1976, as part of the Akademie der Künste and Berliner Festwochen exhibition ‘Soho in Berlin,’ Gordon Matta-Clark went to Germany with the intention of blowing up a section of the Berlin Wall. Dissuaded by friends from such a suicidal action, the result was the following performance.” The film records Matta-Clark as he stencils ‘Made in America’ on the Wall, affixes commercial advertisements over graffiti, and has a run-in with the police. A remarkable record of a little-known Matta-Clark performance, this work is also a historical time capsule of a political and physical landscape that no longer exists. Although posthumously updated with original music by Peter Gordon in 2007, we display the original document here without sound.

Gordon Matta-Clark [*1943 in New York, †1978 in New York] was a founding member of the artist-run Food Restaurant in New York’s SoHo neighborhood. From the early 1970s, Matta-Clark participated in numerous group exhibitions and projects, including documenta VI. Following his death at the age of 35, major retrospective exhibitions have been organized, and in 2007, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, honored him with a retrospective entitled “Gordon Matta-Clark: You Are the Measure.”

JOHN MILLER

In the Middle, 2016

11:13:00

© The artist, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

In the Middle was inspired by a drawing Dan Graham gave the artist as a gift and by John Miller's experience of having lived in Berlin Mitte since 1992. Graham's drawing is a typewritten list that suggests zooming in, step by step, from "the universe" to the center cushion of Graham's sofa. Miller uses this drawing to structure his work via a double movement. As the inter-titles steadily move from center cushion to the universe, the images go in the opposite direction. One leitmotif of this work is the World Clock at Alexanderplatz which features a revolving sculpture of the solar system on top, which can be seen as an idealized metaphor for both political and scientific revolutions. Miller produced the work in 2016, at a time when Angela Merkel's administration decided to accept large numbers of Syrian refugees, among others, on humanitarian grounds.

John Miller [*1954 in Cleveland / Ohio, lives and works in New York and Berlin] is an artist with a diverse body of work spanning painting, sculpture, photography, and music. His art explores consumer culture, identity, and human experience, challenging conventional notions of value and aesthetics. Miller is a Professor of Professional Practice in Art History at Barnard College / Columbia University, New York.

JOHN MILLER

Reconstructing a Public Sphere, 2016

10:26:00

© The artist, Courtesy the artist.

Reconstructing a Public Sphere revisits Lower Manhattan's Battery Park City thirteen years after the 9/11 attack, which drove the artist and his family out of their apartment opposite the World Trade Center. The work considers the history of this planned community, what it may mean post-9/11, and how memorials and public artworks inflect what it has come to represent. Cameras and digital technology play a part as well. Paradoxically, they function as mechanisms for eradicating—or displacing—memory. Conversely, movement through space conjures up involuntary memories—which may coincide with the optical unconscious. The narrative, however, is small-scale. The artist's quest to retrieve his cat, left behind in the wake of an emergency, drives the story.

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IRA SCHNEIDER

Berlin Wall, 1989

5:19:00

© The Estate of Ira J. Schneider, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

In August 1989, Ira Schneider had a premonition and produced a video with special effects of a hole in the Berlin Wall. The video reveals people in motion, giving the impression of crossing the wall, an anticipation of the Wall's fall a few months later in November 1989.

WTC, 1989

0:45:00

© The Estate of Ira J. Schneider, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

In *WTC*, from today's perspective a tragically visionary work from 1989, a static shot of the World Trade Center merges with an animated airplane that sketches an "S"—referring to a dollar sign—above the iconic skyscrapers.

Ira Schneider [*1939 in New York, †2022 in New York], a pioneer of video art, belongs to the generation of artists for whom the 1968 introduction of video technology offered a revolutionary new immediacy in their practices. In his documentary videos, he employed shaky camera movements to create a sense of directness. Schneider was a member of the media ecology-oriented Raindance Foundation (1969–1993), a pioneering group of American artists and scholars that began challenging the monopoly of commercial television in the 1970s.

IRA SCHNEIDER

Manhattan is an Island, 1974

14:41:00

© The Estate of Ira J. Schneider, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

With *Manhattan is an Island*, Ira Schneider captures the essence of New York City through black-and-white footage in 1974. The video portrays the constant motion of people on its streets, offering a glimpse into the city's lively atmosphere and energy.

New York City Parking Game, 1987

8:21:00

© The Estate of Ira J. Schneider, Courtesy Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein [n.b.k.], Berlin.

Ira Schneider's video *New York City Parking Game* takes the viewer on a humorous journey through the world of parking rules and penalties in the city. Led by enthusiastic host Happy Parker, the video explores the ritual of moving cars across the street to clear the way for garbage pickup.

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STUART SHERMAN

Berlin [West]/Andere Richtungen, 1986

6:00:00

© The Estate of Stuart Sherman, Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix [EAI], New York.

“Between the video and its shadow falls the wall.”

— Stuart Sherman

Released in a series titled *Program 2*, these selections of later video works by Sherman, produced in the 1980s and '90s, continue his idiomatic manipulations of everyday objects and situations. Throughout his artistic career, Sherman never limited himself to any one art form, and these works show his agility in adapting his practice to the unique syntax of video. Though he makes use of direct camera addresses and basic video editing, the conceptual witticism of his minimalist “Spectacles” performances is evident, as it is in his own poetic written encapsulations of each work.

Stuart Sherman [*1945 in Providence / Rhode Island, †2001 in San Francisco] defies easy classification. Celebrated as an avant-garde performer, he also worked in film, video, and other visual arts, in addition to writing plays and poems. Sherman settled in New York City’s Greenwich Village in the 1960s, where he was a performer with Charles Ludlam’s Ridiculous Theatrical Company and Richard Foreman’s Ontological-Hysteric Theater Company. Beginning in the late 1970s, he developed a unique performance style that combined the influence of avant-garde theater and conceptual art practices. Remaining outside of any one artistic identity, Sherman considered his work to be performative and visual but with a “literary bent—[I] consider everything I do a form of writing.”

SHELLY SILVER

Former East/Former West, 1994

65:00:00

© The artist, Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix [EAI], New York.

Shot in Berlin in 1992–93 after reunification, *Former East/Former West* is an essay-film about national identity in post-Cold War Germany. Hundreds of street interviews conducted throughout the city document how the people of Berlin view their lives, their city, their nation—three years after the fall of the Wall and two years after the reunification of East and West. Silver questions the very notion of a shared language, focusing on changing definitions of words for political and economic systems—democracy, freedom, capitalism, socialism—and words used to describe nations and identity—nationality, Germany, history, foreigners, home. Uncovering personal and ideological concepts of boundaries and German identity, Silver explores the meanings and uses of national identity.

Shelly Silver [*1957 in New York, lives in New York] often merges stylized black-and-white film with color video, fragmented images with written text and sound, elements of documentary and melodrama with comedy. In the enigmatic narratives of contemporary identity in her work, the modes by which information is disclosed, withheld, and mediated hold meaning. References to broadcast advertising and television formats are informed by Silver’s experience as a commercial video editor. Appropriating the structures and codes of television and cinema narratives and blurring artifice and reality [“real as compared to what?” she asks], Silver relies on the viewer’s complicity—the expectation of how media stories are “read,” the desire to believe and identify with their conventions and characters. Silver participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2003.

LAWRENCE WEINER

A Second Quarter, 1975

88:02:00

© The Estate of Lawrence Wiener, Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix [EAI], New York.

“*A Second Quarter* is decidedly European; the ‘place’ [Berlin] is the catalyst for the ‘action’ [the work]. The works recited in the film are concerned with barriers and borders, physical and geophysical phenomena. The characters also translate, count, and recite the alphabet. They build a narrative that is not a story to be followed dogmatically but rather a pattern from which to extract one’s version of what is seen. The scenes are set in an old bourgeois apartment, in an office near the West Berlin train station, and at the ruins of the Anhalter Bahnhof and its vicinity, with the Berlin Wall in the background.”

— Video Data Bank

Lawrence Weiner [*1942 in New York, †2021 in New York] long pursued inquiries into language and the art-making process. From his pioneering installation works of the 1960s and ‘70s establishing him as a key figure in conceptual art, through his new digital projects, Weiner posited a radical redefinition of the artist/viewer relationship and the very nature of the artwork. Translating his investigations into linguistic structures and visual systems across varied formats and manifestations, Weiner has also produced books, films, videos, performances, and audio works.