

TATE FILM

TV AS MATERIAL

26–28 September 2014

Starr Auditorium, Tate Modern



Production still from *The Amarillo News Tapes*, Doug Hall/Chip Lord and Judy Procter, 1980. Photograph by Wyatt McSpadden. Courtesy Doug Hall

TV AS MATERIAL

Artists and television have a rich history of dialogue and exchange from early broadcast experiments and collaborations to interventions and artist-run television projects. This weekend will explore the ways in which television has been used as a material by artists with newly produced contemporary works and rare historical projects. It will feature the London premiere of BBC ARTS and LUX commissioned films by Kate Davis, Kathryn Elkin, Luke Fowler, Torsten Lauschmann, Stephen Sutcliffe and Alia Syed and a rare all day screening of Jef Cornelis' legendary live broadcast experiment *The Longest Day* 1986. The weekend will present a range of work made internationally by artists including Alex Bag, Christian Jankowski, Katya Sander and Stefanos Tsivopoulos as well as pioneers such as Jaime Davidovich, Doug Hall, Chip Lord, Jody Procter and the collective Videofreex alongside

rare material from artists TV projects *Cash from Chaos / Unicorns & Rainbows* 1994–1997 and *CAC TV / ŠMC TV* 2004–07.

Illustrated talks and discussions will examine the various ways in which artists have sought to reimagine television, exploring its history and archives and producing new works that unpack television formats and investigate the architecture of the TV studio. With contributions from participating artists and discussion with Maeve Connolly, author of *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television* and Koen Brams, curator of the Jef Cornelis exhibition at Liverpool Biennial.

Curated by George Clark, Assistant Curator, Film Tate Modern



Stefanos Tsivopoulos, *Untitled (The Remake)* 2007, film still. Courtesy the artist / Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani and Kalfayan Galleries Thessaloniki, Athens

Tate Film is supported by
LUMA Foundation

tate.org.uk/film

Thoughts, comments, reviews?

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Kathryn Elkin, *Michael's Theme* 2014, video still. Courtesy the artist / BBC / LUX

TV AS MATERIAL 1: ARTISTS AND ARCHIVE AT THE BBC Friday 26 September 2014, 19.00–21.00

Artists and Archives: Artists' Moving Image at the BBC is a unique residency programme based at BBC Scotland, offering six artists unprecedented access to the facilities and archive of the BBC. This programme includes the London premiere of six new moving image works produced as part of the 2014 residency. This event showcases a diverse range of artists' approaches both to television and the archive, and includes the premieres of works by Kate Davis, Kathryn Elkin, Luke Fowler, Torsten Lauschmann, Stephen Sutcliffe and Alia Syed. Followed by a discussion with a selection of the artists chaired by Melissa Gronlund, co-editor of *Afterall Journal*.

Artists and Archive: Artists' Moving Image at the BBC is supported by BBC Scotland, LUX and Creative Scotland.

WEIGHT

Kate Davis, UK 2014, HD Cam, B&W and Colour, Sound, 11:06 min

'Taking a 1961 BBC documentary about artist Barbara Hepworth as its starting point, *Weight* explores how televised depictions of creativity have constructed our understanding of artistic

production and other forms of labour. *Weight* re-imagines the value systems that this documentary is predicated upon and proposes an alternative vision.' – Kate Davis

MICHAEL'S THEME

Kathryn Elkin, UK 2014, HD Cam, Colour, Sound, 7:47 min

'Michael's Theme uses previously unbroadcast fragments from the opening and closing of several episodes in the first two series of *Parkinson* from the 1970s. The work explores the talk-show convention of revealing the mechanisms of television-making, as well as the notion of improvisation within the 'recorded-as-live' TV format and within the repeated live renditions of the jazz theme tune in those earlier episodes. These excerpts and the theme tune for the programme are used as a point of departure to consider the relationship of a live studio audience, crew and talk show host to each other, and how their complicit relationship anticipates the audience who will watch the deferred broadcast.' – Kathryn Elkin

DEPOSITIONS

Luke Fowler, UK 2014, HD Cam, B&W and Colour, Sound, 24:21 min

'Luke Fowler's films dwell on potentiality: what might be, what might have been, what might still be if the world were to turn in a different direction? But film time runs in many directions, as do arguments. Film made only recently can be easily confused with the archival vintage of washed-out or saturated tones and blurred edges. Only the disjunction between sounds that live close within the ear and rich voices from a fading past distinguish archive from present. Gradually the pieces converge: our nostalgia for ancient folkways, traditional song and the romance of freedom, all undercut by scientific rationalism and the pressures of normativity

bringing law to bear on lives resistant to conformity. What is an archive if not a collection of letters to ourselves?' – David Toop, August 2014

THE HIDDEN GOD

Stephen Sutcliffe, UK 2014, HD Cam,
Colour, Sound, 5:31 min

A reworking of the BBC television programme *The Hidden God: Alain Robbe-Grillet* using methods appropriated from Pasolini's trailer for his 1969 film *Medea*.

CRAZY PAVING

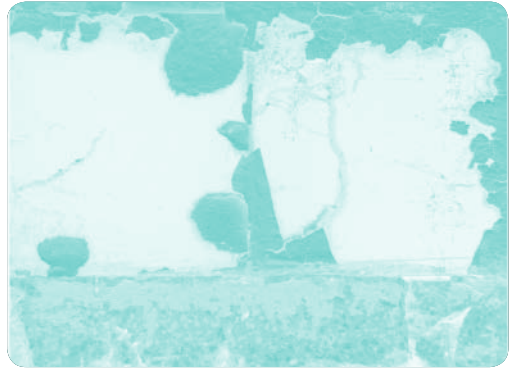
Torsten Lauschmann, UK 2014, HD Cam,
B&W and Colour, Sound, 17:10 min

'*Crazy Paving* is a philosophical journey into human understanding, exploring how we derive and construct meaning from objects, belief systems and the culture that surrounds us. It attempts to find meaning though connecting such diverse phenomena as Art, the Placebo effect and Spoon bending.' – Torsten Lauschmann

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Alia Syed, UK 2014, HD Cam, B&W
and Colour, Sound, 16:32 min

'The objects and places we cannot leave behind create the tapestry that is *Points of Departure*. Exploring themes of personal and collective memory through my relationship to the city of Glasgow, a voice over describes a tablecloth I retrieved whilst clearing my elderly father's house. The film attempts to unravel the threads of memory held within this mundane item and to find an image within the BBC archive that relates to my memories of growing up in Glasgow.



Alia Syed, *Points of Departure*, 2014 video still. Courtesy the artist / BBC / LUX

'My father's unrehearsed attempts to translate an Urdu Ghazal discovered in the archive, a poetic expression of the beauty of love and the pain of loss exposes a process of translation that becomes the key allowing a path through the labyrinth of both my own memory and the BBC archive.' – Alia Syed

TV AS MATERIAL 2:

BROADCAST COLLABORATIONS

Saturday 27 September, 16.00–18.00

This screening will explore how artists have collaborated with broadcasters in both the public and commercial sectors, from pioneers to contemporary practitioners. With material from television projects by and for artists ranging from Jaime Davidovich's early television experiments *QUBE Project* 1980, Alex Bag and Patterson Beckwith's public access television show *Cash from Chaos / Unicorns & Rainbows* 1994–1997 and *CAC TV / ŠMC TV* 2004–07 the weekly broadcast that provided a platform for young artists run by the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) and a commercial broadcaster in Lithuania.

Illustrated talks revisit diverse histories of collaboration and consider how artists have responded to the changing form and context of television with the advent of the internet. With contributions from Koen Brams, curator



CAC TV Reality metashow episode 1 2004, video still.
Courtesy Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius

of the Jef Cornelis exhibition at Liverpool Biennial 2014, Maeve Connolly, author of *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television* and a presentation conceived by the CAC TV / ŠMC TV team and artist Olof Olsson.

Curated by George Clark and Maeve Connolly

QUBE PROJECT USA

Jaime Davidovich, USA 1980, video
10:32 min

In the late 1970s, Warner-AMEX launched the first interactive television system, QUBE, in Columbus, Ohio. This tape of a live broadcast documents Davidovich's effort to exploit QUBE as an artistic medium. He and co-host Carol Stevenson invited audience members to call in and 'direct' the show by instructing the studio operators on how to move, focus and switch between feeds in the multiple-camera setup. Davidovich designed two ways of participating in the show, as follows:

'The first entrusted to the audience the basic decisions about the video – image, sound effects and colour – while the technicians added certain visual effects. The public voted that Carole Stevenson (host of the program) be in the image, that the background colour be blue and that there be classical flute music in the background.

All of these decisions were made from a set of options. The second experiment consisted of a television viewer giving instructions by telephone to studio technicians on the use of the lenses and camera movements, while the rest of the audience voted on which camera should be used.' – Jaime Davidovich, *Jaime Davidovich: Video Works 1970–2000*, Phatory Gallery, New York.

CASH FROM CHAOS / UNICORNS & RAINBOWS Alex Bag and Patterson Beckwith, USA 1994–1997, video, TV series, 20 min [extract]

Alex Bag and Patterson Beckwith's legendary late-night public access programme *Cash from Chaos*, later renamed *Unicorns & Rainbows*, aired weekly in New York City between 1994 and 1997. The artists filled their timeslots with prank calls, surreal, decontextualized clips from other television shows and late night tours of New York City. Television here is both the subject and medium. *Cash from Chaos* turned television against itself, creating punk-rock satires of the most pervasive form of mass media.

CAC TV / ŠMC TV Lithuania 2004–7, video, TV series, 25 min [extract]

'An amorphous group of social misfits and cultural outcasts are handed the reigns of a fledgling television program. Not having any experience in making television, they decide to reinvent the medium.' – Raimundas Malašauskas and Rene Gabri, *Frequently Given Responses for CAC TV*, unpublished paper, quoted in *Broadcast News* Aaron Schuster, Frieze, April 2007

CAC TV / ŠMC TV (2004–7), was a weekly series produced by the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius for broadcast on Lithuania's channel TV1. This unique merger of commercial television and contemporary art was self-proclaimed as a 'meta-show meant to deconstruct reality and its



Videofreex *Process Video Revolution* 1971, film still. © the artist, courtesy Video Data Bank

programming'. The CAC TV Team that consisted of a diverse group of curators and artists, including among them Virginija Januškevičiūtė, Valentinas Klimašauskas, Aurelija Maknytė and Raimundas Malašauskas sought to reimagine the television with the founding principles that 'Every programme is a pilot. Every programme is the final episode.'

TV AS MATERIAL 3: THE TELEVISION STUDIO

Saturday 27 September 2014, 19.00–21.00

The material structures of the TV studio, including sets, production apparatus and control rooms, provide a starting point and a setting for many contemporary artists seeking to explore television's changing institutional architecture and culture. The screening will be preceded by an illustrated lecture by Maeve Connolly that will consider how pioneers as diverse as Videofreex, Ant Farm and Micheal Asher to contemporary artists such as Michelle Deignan, Alexis Hudgins & Lakshmi Luthra, Stefanos Tsivopoulos, Katya Sander and Liz Magic Laser, among others, have recreated, re-imagined and reconfigured the television studio in performances, installations and single channel works.

Curated by George Clark and Maeve Connolly.

PROCESS VIDEO REVOLUTION

Videofreex, USA 1971, video, 23 min

Founded in 1969, the Videofreex were one of the first American video collectives, producing tapes, installations and media events with the newly available video tools. This tape, shot in April 1971, documents the making of a WNET/13 TV show about video collectives and how they use the new video technology.

'The video is a first-person video diary of Videofreex Skip Blumberg and Parry Teasdale as they crash the live TV broadcast uninvited. Shot by Blumberg, they go into an office building, which he says is the 'CIA headquarters.' It is actually Studio 46, a TV studio, which later became WNET/13's famed TV Lab. Various early video pioneers are in the studio discussing how they use video technology. However, there are technical problems at the TV station that prevent the show from running properly.' – Video Data Bank Catalogue www.vdb.org

THE AMARILLO NEWS TAPES

Doug Hall, Chip Lord, and Jody Procter, USA 1980, video, 25:52 min

'This video reflects my interest in examining cultural institutions. In *The Amarillo News Tapes*, we were interested in observing and dissecting what makes news in a small, Midwestern television market. The video shows the three of us in our respective roles as anchor, weatherman, and sportscaster, interacting with the real Pro News Team on the set. In such episodes as: *Opening Routine*, *Liberal Fire*, and *Two Stories*, we attempted to draw attention to the oddities of language and theater that are a part of television news. Although these sections are humorous, our purpose was not to parody the news for its own sake but to examine its style and ritual, which is as much about fiction as it is about fact.' – Doug Hall



Stefanos Tsivopoulos, *Untitled (The Remake)* 2007, film still. Courtesy the artist / Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani and Kalfayan Galleries Thessaloniki, Athens

TELEVISED I: THE I, THE ANCHOR AND THE STUDIO

Katya Sander, Denmark 2006, multi-channel
video, 15 min [extract]

'In Katya Sander's project she set out to ask: "What is a news studio? What kind of speech becomes possible from this space – and what kind of subject? What does it mean to 'anchor' the news? How to ask this question to a news anchor? That is, how to get a news anchor to speak about her/his own position in the news?" Rather than focusing on the studio as a material location, *Televised I* instead draws attention to the various processes, including language, gesture and institutional practices, which structure the production of television news as a form of public communication.' – Maeve Connolly, *Studio Spaces*, Frieze 155, May 2013

UNTITLED (THE REMAKE)

Stefanos Tsivopoulos, Greece 2007,
HD video, 14 min

Produced as part of the first Athens Biennale 2007, Tsivopoulos combines archival footage from the years of the 1967–1973 military dictatorship in Greece which depicts official festivities and parades staged by the Colonels, with his own video footage. The artist reconstructed a late 1960s television studio,

complete with all the original technical equipment that was used during this period. *Untitled (The Remake)* invites the viewer to reflect on the development of television media and the changes wrought in the field of broadcast news in the ensuing period, as well as its increasingly dominant role in the mediation of reality and the shaping of people's consciousness.

'In the centre of my artistic practice is the research, collection and analysis of archive photos, newsreels, film archives and other historically related imagery that constitute part of our collective memory. These documents are taken out of their historical context and used in my work in a reverse mode instead of serving their purpose they are deployed to tell a new story.' – Stefanos Tsivopoulos

TV AS MATERIAL 4: THE LONGEST DAY Sunday 28 September 2014, 15.00–21.30

DE LANGSTE DAG / THE LONGEST DAY

Jef Cornelis, Belgium 1986, video, 376 min

De Langste Dag / The Longest Day, broadcast live on Belgium television on 21 June 1986, is a legendary project in the history of art and television. The work will be shown in its entirety throughout the day.

'I tried to reproduce the events, as far as they were discernable, in a detached manner. I was not part of them. I did not identify myself or put myself on the side of either the curator or the artist. You can think that is cowardly, but that is who I am. After *The Longest Day*, the broadcast on the *Chambres d'Amis* exhibition 1986, I had Jan Hoet, the *Chambres d'Amis* curator, on my back. Initiatives are possible, but television must not be overestimated. A television image is just a television image. It disappears while you're looking at it – if you even see it, because it is rare that anyone has actually seen it. I tried to

give everyone the chance to express themselves. It is true that people cannot handle that.’ –

Jef Cornelis, ‘I was too curious to hand everything over to the artists Interview with Jef Cornelis on his film for television, *Sonsbeek buiten de perken* 1971, and other films on major art events’, Koen Brams & Dirk Pültau www.jefcornelis.be/interview_03.php

‘The title refers to both the date of the broadcast, 21 June, and to the fiction film about the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944 – is without a doubt Jef Cornelis’ magnum opus. The project was initiated on the opening of three large exhibitions in Ghent: *Chambres d’Amis*, an exhibition of 51 artists in 54 private homes, curated by Jan Hoet; *Initiative ’86*, an exhibition in the Saint Peter’s Abbey in which Kasper König, Jean-Hubert Martin and Gosse Oosterhof assembled works of exclusively Belgian artists; and *Initiative d’Amis*, an event set up by artists in the former workers’ community centre De Vooruit. In addition to these three great exhibitions, many other Ghent associations and galleries had their own project programmes.

Jef Cornelis was able to convince the public broadcasting network to schedule a live broadcast about the summer of art in Ghent. For *The Longest Day*, Cornelis used all the knowledge and expertise that he had acquired while working on experimental programmes such as *Icebreaker*, 1983–1984 and *13th Paris Biennale*, 1985. Just like in *Icebreaker*, different locations were linked to each other in *The Longest Day*, whereby the video room at the public broadcasting network functioned as a hub. At the VRT, Chris Dercon acted as a presenter, moderating the discussions with Germano Celant and Denys Zacharopoulos. While making the film about the Paris Biennial, Cornelis had discovered the usefulness of pin-on microphones. In *The Longest Day*, Jan Hoet, among others, walked around with a

microphone, so that everyone watching television in Flanders could hear every word he said.

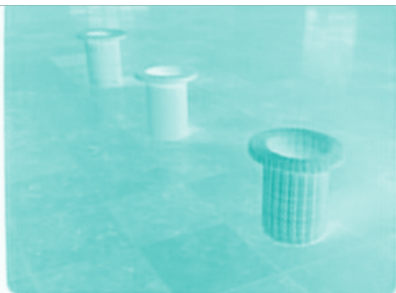
For *The Longest Day*, the arsenal of technical and logistical resources was in fact expanded even further. Instead of three fixed locations, as in *Icebreaker*, Cornelis had a helicopter at his disposal, as well as a team of mobile reporters – the journalists William Van Laeken, Johan Op De Beeck and Terry Verbiest of the VRT News Service – to report on what was happening in every possible location in Ghent. The resources normally only used for reporting on cycle races were made available to the director. Lastly, a telephone switchboard was also installed, so viewers could call in with their questions or comments.

Both the impressive technical facilities and the unusual interactions of the participating artists make *The Longest Day* a highly memorable broadcast. One of the most captivating moments occurs at the start of the film. It is the exchange of contrasting views on *Chambres d’Amis*, about which Jan Hoet in the Museum of Contemporary Art and Daniel Buren in the home of Annick and Anton Herbert are in direct opposition to each other. Another highlight is the end of the broadcast. After the last of the fireworks has gone off at the Saint Peter’s square, the dystopic performance of Jacques Lizène starts in De Vooruit, in which he uses a concrete mixer among other things’. – Koen Brams, *Jef Cornelis - TV works*, catalogue, Liverpool Biennial 2014: A Needle Walks into a Haystack, 2014

Curated by Koen Brams and George Clark in association with Liverpool Biennial.



Jef Cornelis, *De Langste Dag* 1986 © VRT. Courtesy Argos, center for art and media, Brussels



**ABDIJ
WONINGEN**



**MUSEUM
BRUSSEL**



Jef Cornelis, *De Langste Dag* 1986 © VRT. Courtesy Argos, center for art and media, Brussels

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Koen Brams is a freelance researcher, writer and curator. He is the former editor-in-chief of the Belgian art magazine *De Witte Raaf* (1992–2000) and former director of the Jan van Eyck Academie (2000–2011). Recent publications: *The Encyclopedia of Fictional Artists*, JRP Ringier, 2010; *The clandestine in the work of Jef Cornelis*, together with Dirk Pültau, Argos/De Witte Raaf/Jan van Eyck Academie/Marcelum Boxtareos, 2010; *Matt Mullican: Im Gespräch / Conversations* together with Dirk Pültau, DuMont, Köln, 2011. Recent exhibitions: *The breakthrough of 'conceptual art' in Belgium. The case of Fernand Spillemaeckers. Part 1: Towards a 'marxist formalism'*, together with Dirk Pültau, in: Museum M, Leuven, 2013; *La morte addosso. The (anonymous) art of Alessandro and Schède (1966–1980)*, together with Ulrike Lindmayr and Dirk Pültau, in: LLS 387, Antwerp, 2014; *Jef Cornelis – TV works*, in the framework of the Liverpool Biennial 2014: *A Needle Walks into a Haystack*, Liverpool, 5 July–26 October 2014.

Maeve Connolly is a writer and lecturer with a focus on changing cultures and economies of art and media practice. Her publications include *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television*, Intellect/University of Chicago Press, 2014, *The Place of Artists' Cinema: Space, Site and Screen*, Intellect/University of Chicago Press, 2009, and *The Glass Eye: Artists and Television*, Project Press, 2000, co-edited with Orla Ryan. She has contributed to journals such as *Afterall*, *Artforum*, *Art Monthly*, *Frieze*, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, *MIRAJ*, *Mousse*, *Screen* and *The Velvet Light Trap*, and currently co-directs the MA in Art Research Collaboration at Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dublin.

SCREENING SCHEDULE:

Artists and Archive at the BBC
Friday 26 September, 19.00–21.00

Broadcast Collaborations
Saturday 27 September, 16.00–18.00

The Television Studio
Saturday 27 September, 19.00–21.00

The Longest Day
Sunday 28 September, 15.00–21.30

CREDITS

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The six new works from *Artists and Archive: Artists' Moving Image at the BBC* are available to view online at bbc.co.uk/arts from Monday 29 September.

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