

IMAGE AS PHENOMENON: THE IDEA OF CURATOR

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We have never had a media as seductive and therefore as dangerous as television, which releases so huge an amount of freedom that it has little difficulty capturing us as its slaves. The charm of this media tends to turn its inventor into its tool. The multification of image strikes us as a phenomenon of our epoch, which not only means an inflation of quantity but also a life world converted into a world of images.

Video art arose in the sixties and has since become one of the most powerful form of arts in the contemporary world. Our exhibition, PHENOMENON/IMAGE, may be viewed as an expression of concerns and questions such as: what possibilities are opened up for contemporary artists by video art? Is video art phenomena in the form of images or images in the form of phenomena? Video recorder focuses on the recorded, which is analogous to the relationship of the knower to the object to be known. Knowledge, however, is never a mechanical recording of the image of the object, and this provides a basis for understanding video art. I would rather take contemporary art as Urphaenomen, in the phenomenological sense, which comes out of present being and comes into form for the first time. It Participates in the social reality of the day actively rather than mirrors it a passive manner. It rather reacts than reflects Art is by no means a recorder, even when it is performed by means of recorders.

In terms of Ikonologie, the so-called "making picture" should be understood as coming forth and talking form of phenomena themselves in the above-related sense. It reacts to the situation. Only in this original sense of "picture" can we begin to ask: what possibilities are brought to our image-marking world by video recording as a phenomenon of Art? Which direction are we carried to in the course of a world turned into images?

Such a question demands that we attempt a synthesis of different fields of adventures of human spirit and a dialogue between video Art and phenomenological, Ikonologie and sociology, a dialogue we believe is overdue, for the ground has long been prepared for it in the merging course of interactive human activities.

Video art did not come into practice in China until the late eighties. When we decided upon an exhibition of video art, we were quite aware of the difficulty caused by the limited amount of works ready to hand, out of which we would have to choose. Yet we did not want to sit about waiting for the quantity and quality of works of video art reach to a higher level before we consider to exhibit what there is. We would rather take action now and show what is coming to be. The idea behind this exhibition is precisely to promote this form of art by the very action of organizing the exhibited, a reaction to reality, and not merely a reflection of it.

Just as knowing has its intentionality, a camera has its object. Because of this, video may most easily degenerate into a sheer representation of its object. This danger, however, makes us even more willing to take video art as our choice, so that we may explore the essence of art in its radical form.

Again, our choice bears the mark of our attitude to media and technology in general. I am opposed to determinism of technology as well as to new-futurism, which, however, is no reason for refusing new forms of media and for taking pride of being rejectionalist. Television is a Pandora box with both hopes and evils in it. Media is neither promised land nor prohibited land. We do not want to have our time wasted in opposing an extreme tendency with another. I have this deep-rooted belief that even in our information era, what works in the works of art remains the profound feelings of artists that are a reaction to what matters in the world we live in.

作为现象的影像 策划的思路

吴美纯

从来没有一种工具像电视这样具有诱惑力因而具有危险性：电视中释放出的自由，足以使人类沦为这种自由的奴隶，这种工具的魔力将工具的发明者反过来变成它的工具。影像的增殖已成为最触目惊心的当代现象，这里发生的不只是数量上的拥塞充满，同时，生活世界的品质被改变为图像世界。

自六十年代兴起的录影艺术已成为当代艺术最有力的媒体之一。以《现象·影像》为题表明这样一种关注和思考：Video媒体为当代艺术带来了何种可能性？录影艺术是作为一种现象的影像而存在，还是作为一种以影像方式存在的现象？摄像机聚焦于被摄体，可类比为认识者与被认识客体的关系。但认识从来不是机械地摄取客体的影像。因此，我在现象学的意义上将当代艺术思为一种泉涌而出，凝聚而成的源始现象。这一现象有所作为地介入当代社会现实，而不是被动地作为当代现象的镜像。它对情境有所反应，而不是反映之。当代艺术绝不是一台摄像机，即使在它以摄像机为工具时也是如此。

从图像学的角度看，所谓的“制像”应被理解为这种现象的生成创制，它是对一种局面和情境的应对，而不是一种磨制镜面和镜头的手艺。然后我们才可能开始倾听：录像这一艺术现象的发生为图像世界带来了哪些可能性？在世界图像化的历史中，它将把我们带向何方？正是这种倾听的欲望要求我们在知识综合的背景上建立录影艺术与现象学图像学和社会学之间的对话，我们相信这种对话早应发生，问题本身的契合与钩连已先行为思考者之间的对话准备了可能性。

Video艺术的实践八十年代末才在中国开始，选择Video作为展览，给挑选作品的余地带来了许多限制，但我们可能就是应该采取一种更积极的姿态去面对现实，即不是坐等国内录像作品的数量和质量普遍提高之后再用展览去再现一种现状，而是用展览行为本身去促进和启动Video艺术的探索。不但作品，展览操作自身也不只是反映而是对现状的一种反应。

如同认识有其意向性，镜头总有其摄取对象，这就使影像艺术最易沦为对对象的简单再现，选择Video也意在一种较极端的情况下讨论艺术作品的本质。

选择Video，也表明对媒体与技术的态度。我反对工具决定论和新未来主义态度，但它不应成为拒绝新媒体和因循守旧的遗民姿态的理由。电视机这个潘多拉盒子里装有希望也装着罪恶，媒体不是特区也不是禁区，我们不想把时间消耗在不断地互相矫枉过正之上，因为我相信，即使在信息时代，真正发生作用的仍将是艺术家们对问题本身的深刻感受与思考。