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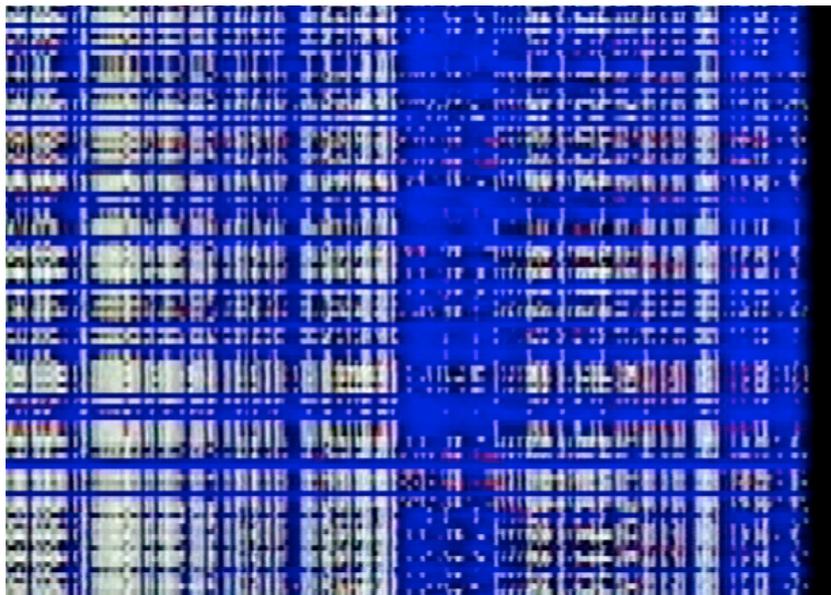
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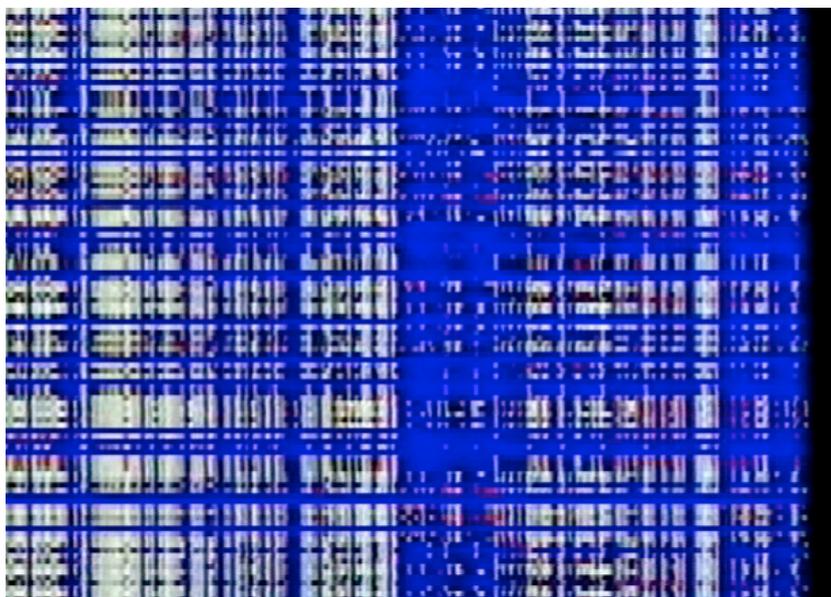
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Gestures of Repetition in Video Art



February 1 - July 10, 2019

Richard E. Peeler Art Center, University Gallery (upper level)

# Repeat, Repeat: Gestures of Repetition in Video Art

“TV has been attacking us all our lives, now we can attack it back.”

– Nam June Paik<sup>1</sup>

Walk into any gallery space nowadays and, most likely, there is some sort of digital screen present. Whether the screen is part of a work of art, or perhaps a mode for visitors to take a survey, we have become quite accustomed to experiencing digital content. This was most certainly not always the case in the traditional art world. Video art, that is, art that involves the use of video and/or audio data and relies on moving pictures,<sup>2</sup> did not come into effect until the more rebellious decades of the 1960s and 1970s. And while it has been over five years since a full exhibition of video art was on display here at the Richard E. Peeler Art Center, spring 2019 offers visitors just that in the form of *Repeat, Repeat: Gestures of Repetition in Video Art*. Not intended to be an exhaustive understanding or retrospective of video art, *Repeat, Repeat* instead seeks to showcase the transformation of video as a medium by emphasizing the creative strategy of repetition.

Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, artists, sought ways to break from the norms of the traditional art world and engage their audiences on a new level by experimenting with new media technologies. Because of its accessibility, its relatively low materials cost, and ease of manipulation, video became a sought after medium for artists from all backgrounds.<sup>3</sup> The earliest work in *Repeat, Repeat* is John Baldessari's 1971 performance based work *I am making art*. In this almost 19-minute-long looping film, Baldessari asks his viewers not only to watch him as he “makes art” over and over and over again, but also, to question what “making art” actually means.

While the early beauty of video art was its low cost and ease of creation, artists quickly realized another bonus of this medium. Video was absent of historical narrative to drive its use, and therefore supported “tremendous potential to carry out several different cultural and political agendas ... [and] could be used as a medium for personal expression.”<sup>4</sup> Additionally, women, in particular, were drawn to the medium precisely because of it being a “form free from the male-dominated canon.”<sup>5</sup> Martha Rosler took to it in her 1975 work *Semiotics of the Kitchen*. In repeated motions and deadpan expressions, Rosler, wearing an apron, moves, in alphabetical order through the utensils, pots, and pans that typically stock a household kitchen. Through the repeated movements of each object's use, Rosler points out the frequent subjectivity of the “woman's” role in the domestic space.<sup>6</sup>

As video art moved into the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, the technology driving the medium was not the only thing developing and changing on a drastic scale. Federal funding once abundant for individual artist endeavors shifted becoming much more scarce. Regardless, the ongoing ease of the medium and intriguing developments of post-production options continued to appeal to artists, morphing the role that video could play in artistic practices. “Many of the visual strategies in video of the '80s were based on post-production technology, such as multiple camera inputs, fade and wipes, slow motion, collage effects, scrolling text, and animation.”<sup>7</sup> In Joon Soo Ha's 2002 *Just*, we are introduced to the entirety of the production process as well as the artist's

1 The Art Story. “Video Art.” The Art Story: Modern Art Insight. Accessed December 17, 2018. <https://www.theartstory.org/movement-video-art.htm>.

2 Tate. “Video Art – Art Term.” Tate. Accessed July 30, 2018. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art-terms/v/video-art>.

3 Ibid.

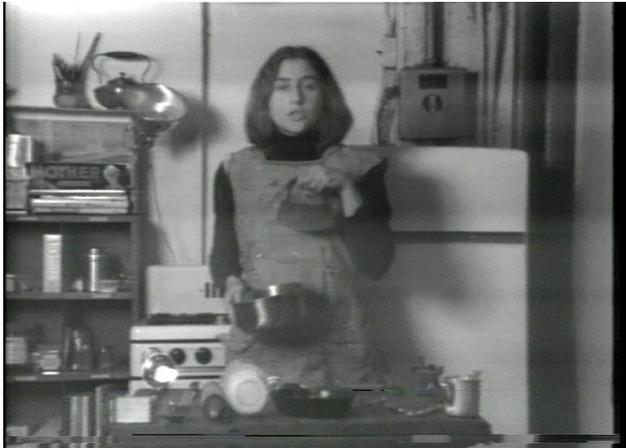
4 Horsfield, Kate. *Busting the Tube: A Brief History of Video Art*. The Video Data Bank Catalog of Video Art and Artist Interviews, 2006, 3-4.

5 Herriman, Kat. “A Brief History of Women in Video Art.” Artsy. Last modified January 13, 2016. Accessed December 17, 2018. [https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-why-are-there-so-many-great-women-video-artists?utm\\_content=st-picks&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=12397614-newsletter-editorial-daily-03-01-18&utm\\_campaign=editorial](https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-why-are-there-so-many-great-women-video-artists?utm_content=st-picks&utm_medium=email&utm_source=12397614-newsletter-editorial-daily-03-01-18&utm_campaign=editorial).

6 The Museum of Modern Art. “Gallery label from Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen, September 15, 2010-March 14, 2011.” MoMA. Last modified 2011. Accessed July 30, 2018. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/88937>.



Still from *I am making art* by John Baldessari, b&w, mono, 1971  
Image copyright of the artist, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Still from *Semiotics of the kitchen* by Martha Rosler, b&w, mono, 4:3, 1975  
Image copyright of the artist, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Still from *Just* by Joon Soo Ha, color, stereo, 2002  
Image copyright of the artist, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

growing interest in the mechanical reproduction of the original. Starting with raw video footage, Ha offers insight to each post production step, finally ending with the obliteration of the American flag waving into broken black and white jarring dots and sounds. “Repetition [here] ... has become a necessity for the activation of meaning and value. It provides the possibility of evaluation and thus, a means of validation.”<sup>8</sup>

Media has morphed into a daily, hourly, by the minute, aspect of our lives. We experience images, video, screens, in every direction we look. According to Kate Horsfield, co-founder of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Video Data Bank, “Video plays a very important cultural role as a kind of media trickster operating from the edge of several different but often overlapping systems of communication.”<sup>9</sup> The role of repetition in media, specifically in video, has only added to its inherent role in saturating our everyday lives. While it started as a medium void of history in the 1960s, now, after over 50 years of artistic use, video has a history void of sharply defined parameters. Comprised of early video works through today, *Repeat, Repeat: Gestures of Repetition in Video Art* asks viewers to analyze not only the transformation of video as a medium but also the use of repetition – and the tension it creates – as an art form itself.

Alexandra Chamberlain

Assistant Director and Curator of Exhibitions and Education

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### *Repeat, Repeat: Gestures of Repetition in Video Art*

February 1 – June 10, 2019

DePauw University, Richard E. Peeler Art Center

10 W. Hanna Street, Greencastle, IN 46135

Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10am-4pm; Sat. 11am-5pm; Sun. 1-4pm

765.658.4336

[depauw.edu/arts-and-culture/arts/peeler/](http://depauw.edu/arts-and-culture/arts/peeler/)

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7 Horsfield, Kate. *Busting the Tube: A Brief History of Video Art*. The Video Data Bank Catalog of Video Art and Artist Interviews, 2006. 7.

8 Kahng, Erik. ed. *The Repeating Image: Multiples in French Painting from David to Matisse*. Baltimore, MD: Walters Art Museum, 2007. 20.

9 Horsfield, Kate. *Busting the Tube: A Brief History of Video Art*. The Video Data Bank Catalog of Video Art and Artist Interviews, 2006. 8.



Still from *Lightning* by Paul and Marlene Kos, b&w, mono, 4:3, " open reel video, 1976  
Image copyright of the artist, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## WORKS IN REPEAT, REPEAT:

*Repeat, Repeat: Gestures of Repetition in Video Art* features eight artworks: two from the DePauw University Permanent Art Collection, one from an independent artist, and five borrowed from the Video Data Bank (VDB) at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.<sup>10</sup>

- *I am making art*, John Baldessari, 1971, b&w, mono, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, Martha Rosler, 1975, b&w, mono, 4:3, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- *Just*, Joon Soo Ha, 2002, color, stereo, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- *Bad*, Vasulkas, Inc., 1979, color, mono, 4:3, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- *Lightning*, Paul and Marlene Kos, 1976, b&w, mono, 4:3, 1/2" open reel video, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- *Muscle Memory*, Eduardo Gil, 2007, 2010.10.1, 4:3, color, stereo, DePauw University Permanent Art Collection
- *Regimes of (dis)order*, Betsy Stirratt, 2016, 2018.14.1, 16:9, color, stereo, DePauw University Permanent Art Collection
- *This Pink Mud*, Mores McWreath collaboration with Cathy Park Hong, 2011, 1080p HD video, courtesy of the artist

COVER: Still from *Bad* by Vasulkas Inc., color, mono, 4:3, 1979  
Image copyright of the artist, courtesy of Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Still from *This Pink Mud* by Mores McWreath, collaboration with Cathy Park Hong, 2011, 1 minute 30 seconds, 1080p HD video, Image courtesy of the artists.

## VIDEO WORKS IN THE DEPAUW UNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION:

The DePauw University permanent art collection at the Richard E. Peeler Art Center currently holds twenty video works by artists from all over the world. If fascinated by a particular title, looking for more information on the collection as a whole, or interested in a viewing or classroom use, please contact us.

- *El Gringo*, Francis Alÿs, 2003
- *Le Moment*, David Claerbout, 2003
- *Partition Linéaire 2: Vivaldi Griselda 'Agitata da due Venti (Cecilia Bartoli)*, Fabiana Cruz, 2006
- *Muscle Memory*, Eduardo Gil, 2007
- *Over My Shoulder*, Douglas Gordon, 2003
- *Evocation*, Terence Hannum, 2007
- *Video Drawings*, Mark Harris, 2004
- *Blind Spot*, Gary Hill, 2003
- *I JEDI*, Pierre Huyghe, 2003
- *Waltz*, Joan Jonas, 2003
- *Encore*, Issac Julien, 2003
- *Automatic Writing*, William Kentridge, 2003
- *Ouroboros*, Jen Liu, 2007
- *WGG*, Paul McCarthy, 2003
- *I Want to See How You See*, Pipilloti Rist, 2003
- *Time After Time*, Anri Sala, 2003
- *Out on the Weekend: The Taking of Leisure Mountain*, SIMPARCH, 2007
- *Regimes of (dis)order*, Betsy Stirratt, 2018
- *Top 10 Asian Brands*, Dmitry Strakorsky, 2007
- *Building (for Anneka Herre)*, José Versoza, 2006

This exhibition was made possible by the Arthur E. Klauser Asian and World Community Collection Endowment. Additional films provided by the Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

<sup>10</sup> The Art Story. "Video Art." The Art Story: Modern Art Insight. Accessed December 17, 2018. <https://www.theartstory.org/movement-video-art.htm>.