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Zachęta — National Gallery of Art

ZACHĘTA

Videotapes

Early Video Art (1965–1976)

curator: Michał Jachuła

collaboration: Julia Leopold

exhibition design: Wojciech Popławski (OP Architekten)

production: Marek Janczewski and team

educational programme: Marta Miś

VITO ACCONCI, JOHN BALDESSARI, LYNDA BENGLIS, DARA BIRNBAUM,
DON BURGY, JAMES BYRNE, PETER CAMPUS, DOUGLAS DAVIS, CARA DEVITO,
VALIE EXPORT, TERRY FOX, ANNA BELLA GEIGER, FRANK GILLETTE,
TINA GIROUARD, JULIE GUSTAFSON, HERMINE FREED, NANCY HOLT,
JOAN JONAS, BERYL KOROT, MARLENE KOS, PAUL KOS, SHIGEKO KUBOTA,
SUZANNE LACY, RICHARD LANDRY, MARY LUCIER, IVENS MACHADO,
ANDY MANN, CYNTHIA MAUGHAN, SUSAN MOGUL, ANTONI MUNTADAS,
BRUCE NAUMAN, LETÍCIA PARENTE, NAM JUNE PAIK, JÓZEF ROBAKOWSKI,
MARTHA ROSLER, DAN SANDIN, IRA SCHNEIDER, ILENE SEGALOVE,
STEINA & WOODY VASULKA, VIDEOFREEX, WILLIAM WEGMAN, LAWRENCE WEINER

WIDEO TAŚMY

WCZESNA SZTUKA WIDEO (1965–1976)

VIDEOTAPES. EARLY VIDEO ART (1965–1976)

The exhibition *Videotapes. Early Video Art (1965–1976)* situates video in a time when it was not yet in the mainstream of artistic circulation and functioned primarily as an experiment that remained outside the area of interest of art institutions, market and distribution. It presents single-channel works made on magnetic tapes. They can be characterised as intimate, spontaneous recordings, mostly made by the artists themselves. The selection of videos and the significance of the medium in the exhibition is close to thinking about drawing. A hand-drawn sketch on a piece of paper and a video, which is a kind of note on magnetic tape, have much in common.

The cut-off date for the earliest works exhibited at the Zachęta was the introduction of portable video equipment on the US market in the 1960s. Thanks to the use

of cheap reusable tapes, it was possible to easily record images along with sound. The biggest role in the story was played by the Sony Portapak camera. Portable, affordable, relatively lightweight and easy to use, it quickly became a new tool for artists in their creative work. Mobile and handy, the Sony Portapak camera was rapidly adopted by artists as a new tool for creative activity.

Most of the presented material consists of works from the American cultural circle. It comprises both works that touch upon social, existential, emancipatory and identity issues, as well as autothematic pieces, dealing with the medium itself, including numerous videotapes made by women. We can see many types of moving image, from recordings of personal narratives, through performances for the camera and conceptual statements, to works close to documentary.

The exhibition at Zachęta — National Gallery of Art in Warsaw brings together works by 42 authors, including those recognised as video art pioneers. Early videotapes with a history reaching back half a century still remain current and understandable. The artists' unpretentious statements on the one hand show engaged attitudes towards reality, and on the other hand, they are not without distance and a sense of humour. They owe their unique character to the personal, yet universal, concepts, simplicity of communication and the raw form. ●●●

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