

of expression as with every day reality: 'art=life' and, extended, 'art×man'. Art's claim to eternity is denied. Man is in the foreground. Creativity, according to Beuys, is man's decisive chance to become emancipated in socio-political terms.

Josef Beuys also propagates the indisputable equality of everything that exists. There are no isolated phenomena, because the general interrelation and entanglement of all with everything is so evident. He believes it important that man should find his individuality, that he should become aware of the possibility of carrying within himself the famous 'pivot of Archimedes'.

Beuys, who has repeatedly said that he could just as well be a natural scientist, interprets the creative process as such as 'sculpture'. This includes every form of organization. Beuys considers his founding of a 'students' party' as much a sculptural process as the 'bureau for direct democracy' which he has established.

Beuys also wants to encourage the greatest possible number of people in the greatest possible number of places to think about the nature of democracy. It is understandable that a man who, in his capacity as an artist, is dedicated to a new form of 'totality in art' by making human existence a creative one, will be involved in constant disputes with administrative bureaucracy. And although he rejects the mechanism of traditional logic in accordance with his concept of a more humane art, a more creative human existence, he manages again and again to defeat bureaucratic rules and regulations by his strictly rational and irrefutable argumentation. (These successes contribute to his rapidly growing fame and to the steadily growing sympathy he enjoys everywhere, and it is this which provokes the congruent antipathy. On the other hand, there remains the fact that Beuys's creations are being sold at top prices on the international art market. □

KLAUS U. REINKE

## Video artists

Valid standards are being devalued. Until now the yardstick has always been the quality of the finished work. How the artist arrived at his result was immaterial. (In this context for 'objective' read 'impersonal'.) But in contemporary art the concept of the personal, subjective and individual is of supreme importance. The so-called 'objective' has itself become immaterial. Aesthetics have been accorded a new status—a political perspective in a concrete socio-political context, because their

object is to provoke, to allow each man to be autonomous, an emancipated individual. And this through an intensified tenderness which frees the imagination. Individuality is the way to emancipation.

On this basis the result of his work is of no account to the artist. No longer is he concerned to produce something finished. No longer does he feel compelled to create 'works for posterity'. Homer's 'eternity' has lasted for 2000 years. Gottfried Benn believed that posthumous fame would end after 70 years. Contemporary artists look no further than the present. In Conceptual Art 'Art in the Mind'—this takes the form of abandoning the palpable. Instead, the activation of creativity becomes the foremost concern. In Process Art this development is taken a step further. The creative, the art, process is the focal point. At this stage the rejection of the 'objective' standard is complete. This is the point where art turns into direct socio-political expression.

This standpoint has its roots in the tenets of Surrealism as held by Breton—Surrealism with a different approach, as propounded by Henry Miller, who wrote in *Sexus* that it is reality which needs changing. In this light there is no intention, in any concrete, ideological sense, to change the whole world. Rather, the intention is to indicate to the individual the possibility of changing himself on the basis of his own existential structure and the circumstances in which he finds himself. At a first (misleading) glance, Conceptual and Process Art appear esoteric; in fact these expressions of art contain pragmatic proposals for everyday reality, which in view of its usefulness to the individual requires a new approach in thinking. Thus present-day art proves to be primarily man-oriented.

It is logical that art which no longer wants to be art in the traditional sense requires a new medium, free from transmitted practices. It must give a specific manifestation of the self-taught a chance to flourish as a new kind of style, where spontaneity can function as one kind of expression. This spontaneity, said von Kleist (essay on the puppet theatre) is no longer possible or valid unless it springs from the highest intellectual level.

At this point one recognizes the truth of the dictum that today nothing can be regarded as an isolated phenomenon. Nothing exists on its own or in itself alone. Nothing can be seen as entirely separate from everything else surrounding it. Politics, economics, sport, sculpture, are not isolated phenomena. Every single part is defined by the sum of all parts. Modern man moves in a tangential system.

It is not surprising that the basic impulse for the most authoritative

contemporary trends in the visual arts comes from the Rhineland. The Rhineland capital, Düsseldorf, is the home not only of Josef Beuys—one of the leading initiators on the contemporary art scene—but of many other artists influencing contemporary trends. The man who laid the foundation for the trend is Gerry Schum. Now 33, he studied medicine and (more significantly) film production and camera technique at the Berlin Film Academy. Eventually applying his knowledge of film, Schum began to report on art for German television.

In dealing with the technical facilities available he found the creative potential lacking during his formal studies. Dissatisfied with the conventional approach to art reporting in television, he 'invented' a brand-new television presentation of art: the 'Television Gallery'. Once a year, each time using a different television station, he produced a critical exploration of art on the TV screen. In April 1969, his first 'exhibition' was transmitted under the title of 'Land Art' and brought him to notice as a figure in progressive art. One reason for this was that for the first time he had shown in context the affinity of artists as different as Long, Flanagan, Oppenheim, Smithson, Boezem, Dibbets, de Maria and Heizer.

Schum took his camera into each artistic process as a participatory instrument. Without the specific characteristics of a camera, the various manifestations could not have occurred. Another striking feature was the fact, new to television, that art was no longer treated as documentary. Thus effectively popularized before such a large audience, 'Land Art' anticipated the rejection of traditional concepts.

A year later Schum presented his second television exhibition, 'Identifications'. This put Beuys, Rinke, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Ger van Elk and others into a conceptual context to make them the subject of more general discussion, more general because of the implicit acceptance by a more general public of the medium of television.

Not long after Schum found it essential to establish a permanent gallery (until then he had lived in a caravan to achieve the mobility compatible with his 'style of work', identical with his 'style of living'), and settled in Düsseldorf, at Ratingerstrasse 37. From then on he called his gallery 'Video-Galerie Gerry Schum'.

Schum also realized the obvious potential offered by new technical developments, turning his attention to video tape recording processes (also used by the police, and by television dealers for advertising purposes). This permits faster operation than film coverage, since it involves neither developing nor printing. It enables the artist to

check the result immediately, and to erase and re-record when a first attempt is unsuccessful. The completed tapes can then be sold through established art trade channels. The price of each tape is comparable to that of other works by the same artist. The duration of those so far on sale varies between one and sixteen minutes. An art-loving public must thus have to come to terms with the fact that art no longer exists only in the form of pictures on a wall, pieces of sculpture, but also as video tapes which anyone will be able to play on a television set, not unlike records on a record player.

Apart from private collectors, some leading contemporary museums have acquired video equipment to present tapes as part of their normal exhibitions. These include Paul Wember's Kaiser Wilhelm Museum in Krefeld, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Stedelijk van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven under the direction of Jan Leering. Schum himself has also organized video exhibition 'groups' in Italy (Galleria Sperone, Turin), Holland (Art and Project, Amsterdam), Belgium (Galérie MTL, Brussels) and West Germany.

So far, Gerry Schum's is the only gallery to produce video tapes. New York's Leo Castelli Gallery alone is moving in a somewhat comparable direction but restricts itself to the use of film material and art documentations, of a kind foreign to Gerry Schum's concepts since his ideas centre on recording the artistic process in action.

It is these recordings alone which give existence to the flying exercises of the Italian de Dominicis, the creation of circles by Ulrich Rückriem or the use of water as an instrument of art by Klaus Rinke of Düsseldorf. For Rinke's particular form of expression Schum's method is of particular importance, since the significance of his ideas on the handling of water is almost entirely outside the scope of the conventional museum.

Klaus Rinke's mode of expression is only one example of the work done by video artists. Taken as a whole, these intentions focus on the process of becoming aware of the fact that man also contains within himself non-material and non-rational elements. Video artists tacitly imply in their actions that every individual, mindful of the complexity of his makeup, should forcefully state the demands necessary to fulfil this. □

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[Video tapes of the following artists are obtainable from Schum's: Baldessari, Brouwn, Buren, de Dominicis, Dibbets, Rinke, Rückriem, Weiner, Beuys, Gilbert & George, Merz, and Ruthenbeck. Each video tape is accompanied by a signed and numbered certificate. Prices range from DM580 to DM9800.]

## Collectors

The Rhineland is not only a central region for artists and gallery owners; along the Rhine and Ruhr can also be found the most potent German private collectors. Even ten or twenty years ago the buying of works of art was a privilege enjoyed by industrialists, publishers and bankers; now the acquisition of twentieth-century art has become a hobby of the so-called free professions.

The educated, prosperous middle class is the social stratum which supplies most collectors. Doctors, lawyers, architects, advertising executives and junior managers in industry show their attitude towards art in various ways. In most cases collecting begins at the age of 30-35, when the eye has been trained and the solid financial basis has been consolidated, and individual taste is often subordinate to concrete investment considerations.

The Düsseldorf Kunsthalle exhibited this summer a selection from collections of members of 'free professions', which indicated the following trends: little risk-taking courage or support for progressive anti-art, rather a definite status concern combined with preference for German Expressionism (mainly Nolde, Feininger, Schmidt-Rottluff) and for the Ecole de Paris. This applies mainly to middle generation collectors. Younger collectors show a weakness for the constructivist trend, for the Zero-representatives Piene, Mack and Uecker and for Pop Art. Multiples and originals of the art market magnet, Beuys, are strongly represented. Dieter Rot, whose spice objects recently fetched astronomical prices in the Düsseldorf Eat-Art Gallery (up to DM100,000), has also pushed well ahead. The newest art forms are exclusively discussed between the artists themselves, gallery owners, critics and museum people; being insiders, it is natural that they react more quickly than the consumer-oriented art buyer.

The collection of the Aachen chocolate manufacturer Herr Ludwig enjoys international renown. Despite the economic crisis it grows steadily and is constantly being added to. New acquisitions are bought almost every month—recently, works by Twombly, Bruce Nauman, Kienholz and Heerich. The focal point of these new acquisitions, which have been incorporated in the loan-section of the Cologne Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, is a group of Beuys objects (drawings, collages, creations in fat and felt, plastic objects), which were sold to the Aachen collector by the former art critic and present art dealer Hans Strelow after his return from New York. The price was not revealed, but it can be assumed that it came close to the approximate sum of DM100,000 given to the art

dealer Alfred Schmela by an industrial patron to enable the Krefeld museum to add a gigantic Beuys object (TV set with video-recorder and wooden shelf with objets trouvés) to its collection. In contrast to the 'open collection' of the Darmstadt manufacturer Ströher, who resold a number of Pop Art works, Ludwig's collection is 'closed': it is the basis for new acquisitions, not for barter.

While the Ludwig collection has grown from an involvement with classical modernism, the Hack collection (Cologne) was based on the traditional ties of its creator with Germany's late Gothic period. This homage to a fertile historic art epoch was contrasted by the commitment to classical modernism. Hack owns one of the most important collections of Constructivists (Popova, Malevich, Lissitzky, Moholy Nagy, Larionoff, Mondrian, Doesburg).

The collection of the Düsseldorf banker Forberg, which comprises about 100 objects, is characteristic of a friend and patron of the arts who has always been actively integrated into the Rhineland cultural life. Forberg's preferences also concentrate on classical modernism right through to abstract art. American art of the Sixties would not be at home in a collection which—according to a description by Werner Schmalenbach—appears as 'a celebration of the atmosphere and style of life'. The collection centres on the paintings of both groups of the Ecole de Paris, with Picasso, Léger and Laurens, with Estève, Poliakov, de Stael, and Viera da Silva. In spite of a predominance of works of the nineteen-fifties this collection is not one-sided—it includes works by German Expressionists, as well as Chadwick, Nicholson and Tobey. One could call the evaluation of colour as the criterion for artistic quality in painting the guiding principle of this collection.

One of the examples of how a collector can misuse commercial opportunities of his time is the so-called Pop collection of the Düsseldorf lawyer Beck, which was first exhibited at the Bonn Landesmuseum two years ago. This is a collection of graphic art and multiples which has conformed with the spectacular boom for Pop Art and is almost completely devoid of personal touch. The only recognizable theme in this accumulation of popular mass-produced art is a stringing together of banal individual subjects—like automobiles, cups, shoes, faces—iconographic identities, joined together by accident (the generalizing trend of Pop Art) rather than by the collector's discerning eye. A big group of the graphic works of the collection, particularly those of German origin, determine the choice of the art clubs' inexpensive annual

publications, which Beck is adept at economic factors.

There are a number of well-established collections of artists exchanging by buying from whom they are from Düsseldorf painter Klapheck keeps acquisitions—only one or other of his in any major exhibition. Apart from these there exist artists from which are shown exhibitions. Two Düsseldorf art exhibitions under 'Düsseldorf artists did not arouse me was indicative of artists appreciate colleagues. Yves seemed to have prepared for the younger generation Gotthard Graubner painter of cushions pictures and objects Goller, Herbin, I typical of him the ensemble contain Caspar David Friedrich loan from the Düsseldorf Kunstmuseum. made it clear that is the most enthusiastic contemporary art now worth million it contains not on artists and Zero excellent works of modernism.

There are few contemporary art programme. One Reiner Speck of (drawings, picture Walter de Maria, Arnulf Rainer, R apart from the artworks by Beuys. popular-decorative investment and pl considerations have factors in the built collection. Nor de collection, at Neve as a conglomerate and styles, but as over decades and the development of nothing unrelated Picasso, Braque, Fontana, Yves Kl Lichtenstein, Ray Pistoletto) were b when their market means sufficiently eliminate risk. Th particular represent standard which ha the evolution of a collection above merely confirming or serving as a social CHRISTIAN HERCHE