

Video / Peter Weibel

VIDEOLOGY

In the last decade the avantgardefilm was occupied with structural questions of the organisation and sequence of signs, the formal syntax of the calculus film, and how this filmic syntax generates meaning. By investigating possible interpretations of images the filmmakers have enlarged the codes of cinematography, but not the calculus. Still they have introduced some transitions to stills (fotography) and video.

What are now the videologic constants of the calculus video that seems to be a broader one as film, if any analogy is useful? I would propose five features that construct the video system (VT videotapes, TV television, VTR videotape recording) formally, by which new relations and new works could be discovered and produced: synthetic, transformation, selfreference, instant time, box-character.

The synthetic generation of the image by an electronic machine (which needs not to picture the existing world) and the transformation possibilities of the signs are therefore the foremost field of the psychedelic/surrealistic videofreak, but also the field of future rigorous formal investigation of colour, time, space. For the cool user of the new dope (tv and vt are drugs as all time machines) is the feedback possibly the most interesting, which has two sides, the instant time = simultaneity (that you can see what happens as reality as the same time as picture) and the selfreference (that objects can be selfreferred in time; selfreference is a tense form of being). Because of its selfreference and its time element (live or delayed time) video is specially suitable for live performances and actions. By box-character I just mean that machine-character of video as time and space switch in a living room. As time-space-machine video is therefore also very suitable for new concepts of sculpture video sculptures and video installations.

In the classical representative art time played no role. But with film and video as non-classical arts time started to emerge in the art object (a classical artform like sculpture even got influenced by time and became process art etc.): If you see history as a kind of selfrealisation of man and art as a kind of selfdemonstration, then you can say that video is the first mean in the history of art that has physically realised such a basic concept of western culture like selfreference (i.e. the basis of consciousness). Video is like a new organ in the evolution of man, it is the implementation of a mental structure into technical construct, a shift of code, an enlargement of the code into its own basis.

Is it allowed to say that the classical cinematography grew to expanded cinema (with all its new formal actions and projection systems) and transformed with video etc from a projection system to a general picture processing and generating machine?