chapter 3: *mediazone*

There has always been a twin development in the history of art – of what is (and what is allowed to be) represented and by what (technological) means it is represented. Different technologies allow particular realities to be seen, or freshly seen, from which new ways of being in the world can emerge. Certain artworks can enable this process. On the subject of the media work of French artist Fred Forest, in 1975 Czech theorist Vilem Flusser said: "Forest cannot change the press, but he can show us what it is. It is important, because from a new vision can result a new action."[1] Art has an ability to demonstrate how various media technologies work, and likewise artists can provide new experiences of the world, new ways to connect with physical and cultural phenomena and with other human beings. The relation between technology and what we are able to articulate because of it – a convergence which leads to the emergence of totally new modalities – underlies this dissertation.

The previous chapters have given an overview of the contemporary television and urban screen terrain. This pervasive media landscape aims to manipulate people to become consuming and one could argue consumed subjects. How artists respond to this aim is

the subject of this chapter, focusing on artists who reuse media. It argues that there are ways we can manipulate the media we are increasingly manipulated by.

It will look at artists who present their media reuse work in a gallery or screening context. The artists cited use media in a way that refers to the dominant channels of media delivery. Not only do they reference in the work the medium, the *expression*, that is the stuff of video tape for example – but they reference the subject, the *content* of that media, and what it constructs – what set of relations unfolds within itself.

The key themes of the thesis, that of media and other spatialities, the idea of truth to materials in the digital environment and the idea that the content of one medium is always another medium are exposed here through this examination of artists' works.

The chapter will firstly look at some historic approaches to media reuse, then look in detail at a number of works in the exhibition **::contagion::** in October 2001, move into a brief discussion of copyright issues and media reuse before looking at the works of artists Stan Douglas, Janos Sugar, Pat Hoffie and Jamie Waag.

media reuse background

> *We all knew we were interested in different things, like video synthesis and electronic video, which was definitely different from community access-type video, but we didn't see ourselves in opposite camps. We were all struggling together and we were all using the same tools.* [2]

When such media technologies as video became available in the mid-sixties artists used them, often for reasons to do with a critique of media control itself. Patricia Mellancamp writes that the results of this video use were portrayed as personal, innovative, and radical. She says that it was fervently believed that:

simultaneity, feedback, delay, satellite capacity, and electronic visions would foster, like drugs and random sex, new states of consciousness, community, and artistic and political structures. With its immateriality, erasability, easy operation, reproducibility, and affinity with mass culture, video was imagined as challenging the institutions of commercial television and art – including the status of the precious art object and the figuration of the individual artist, both of which were considered to be leftovers from 'product' culture.[3]

This is true of the work discussed in the 1960s New York magazine *Radical Software*,[4] as it is in the work of US West Coast artist groups like Ant Farm. Formed in 1968, Ant Farm, demonstrating an early anti-television and anti-technology tendency ploughed a Cadillac into a wall of burning TV sets in the 1975 performance video *Media Burn*. The video tape opens with Ant Farm member Doug Hall, introduced as John F. Kennedy (assuming the ironic role of the Artist-President) who delivers a speech about the impact of mass media monopolies on American life: "Who can deny that we are a nation addicted to television and the constant flow of media? Haven't you ever wanted to put your foot through your television?"[5] This work followed their 1974 media reuse work *The Eternal Frame*, which restaged iconic images of the Zapruder Super8 film of the Kennedy assassination.

Europe in the 1960s and 1970s was also burning with anti-media sentiment. Gianni Romano writes that in the 1960s Fluxus had identified the mass media as the most detrimental ideological vehicle. The largely European movement encouraged its artists therefore to express themselves with the widest range of forms of mass culture: TV, film, photography, newspapers, commercial products.[6] At the end of the 1970s other artists were developing these dynamics, constructing a mode of operating which was to mold postmodern practice. Romano claims that this practice was characterized by the use of citations and borrowings of forms already filtered by the mass communications media with "the aim of revealing the mechanisms of seduction of the image. The famous phrase of McLuhan, 'the medium is the message' was seen as a threat in those years."[7]

At the same time as this deconstruction of the message embedded in the medium was a focus, artists were also investigating the particular qualities of these media technologies like video tape as a medium itself. For example, Bill Viola and others were interested in the texture of video, the glitches on the tape, the noise inherent in early editing systems as well as video's potential for capturing and organizing time, in 'realtime'. The classic 1972 work *Vertical Roll* by Joan Jonas attests to the investigation of the materiality of the recording medium. New York's Electronic Arts Intermix site writes of the 20 minute black and white piece:

> *'Vertical Roll' is a seminal work. In a startling collusion of form and content, Jonas constructs a theater of female identity by deconstructing representations of the female body and the technology of video. Using an interrupted electronic signal -- or "vertical roll" -- as a dynamic formal device, she dislocates space, re-framing and fracturing the image. The relentless vertical roll, which repeats throughout the tape, disrupts the image by exposing the medium's materiality.*

Using her body as performance object and video as a theatrical construct, Jonas

unveils a disjunctive self-portrait.[8]

These examples demonstrate that the so-called 'modernist' principle of finding the essence of one's medium was operating within art practice around the new media of the day. Interestingly this work by Jonas positions the artist as being well 'inside' the materiality of the media, a position not taken up by later reuse artists who saw themselves more as 'outside' the media flow. Jonas' entire body of artwork seems to speak to the tensions of taking this 'insider' approach, particularly as regards personal yet mediated memory.[9]

In her essay "Paradox in the Evolution of an Art Form: Great Expectations and the Making of a History," Marita Sturken quotes Martha Geven, who in 1986 wrote:

Even without a guiding set of principles that might constitute a theoretical

premise, video made by artists tries to gain a foothold in contemporary culture at

large, resting all the while on the traditions of fine art. In accordance with

modernist art tenets, theoretical constructs pertaining to video cannot be directly

translated from either film or visual arts like painting. [In modernist discourse]

each medium exhibits distinctive properties and those specific to video must be

defined in order to validate that medium's aesthetic credentials and participation

in existing cultural institutions and to distinguish video from its crass relative,

commercial television.[10]

The artists Geven is speaking about here saw themselves as positioned *outside* of mass media, and tried to keep video art distinct from the realm of commercial television. From

the perspective of 2003, these artists appeared to be labouring under the same illusion as King Canute when he tried to hold back the tide. However their 'outsider' position makes more sense when it is recognized that these artists didn't necessarily 'grow up' inside the mass media. They were not born into it as a later generation of artists were. They also appear to be making work differently to earlier Pop art with its cool, detached approach to mass media. Sturken contends that while it cannot be denied that many of the first videotapes made by artists were "concerned in a reflexive way with the specific properties of video – what distinguished it from film, painting, sculpture, and performance" for example,[11] this aspect of early work was closely allied with other concerns at the time, and she lists minimal sculpture, conceptual art, and body art/performance "in a reduction of the work of art to the bare essentials of the tools and a questioning of the art process."[12] She claims that "video history may have isolated the reflexive aspects of early video-tapes to emphasize video's properties, but these tendencies in video formed part of a larger aesthetic discourse in many art media."[13] This is the context around the 1972 production of Joan Jonas' *Vertical Roll*.

Sturken writes of the institutional pressure on artists who used video from the Museum of Modern Art in New York and other large institutions to stay within this modernist framework and define their practice within a 'medium essentialism.' She claims that this tendency was well developed by the 1970s, and that within the modernist conventions that have governed these institutions "a medium that deserves curatorial attention is defined by its properties and most importantly through its development or history. Thus, the establishment of criteria for the history of video has been a means for video departments to defend not only their existence but their funding."[14]Sturken's essay shows how the modernist idea was institutionalized around video, limiting broader definitions to do with hybrid practices. However, institutions aside, there is no reason to

dismiss the Greenbergian notion out of hand. Issues around materiality are still very relevant to hybrid practices, they simply extend the idea of 'truth to materials' into the realm of remediation and contagion. This extension of the idea will be argued for later in the chapter and is also discussed in depth in the *material media* report.[15]

At the time, this institutional tension around questions of the materiality of video, coupled with the culture of opposition to commercial television helped to maintain the 'outsider' position of the artist vis a vis the mass media, at an international level. Building on this tendency Benjamin Buchloh has said of the American artist Dara Birnbaum, that her generation of artists carried "out a critical analysis of systems of representation, of culture in the sense of the production and consumption of everyday culture."[16] She has stated that she wanted to "define the language of video art in relation to the institution of television."[17] In her media critiques of the late 1970s, including *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (1978-79), she used rigorous tactics of deconstruction and appropriation to dismantle television's codes of representation. Birnbaum claims to be among the first US artists to apply these strategies to destabilize the language of television texts.[18]

Analyzing TV's idiomatic grammar (reverse shot, cross-cut, inserts) and genres (game shows, sitcoms, crime dramas), she recontextualized pop cultural icons through fragmentation and repetition in the 1980 works *Kojak and General Hospital*. She writes: "By dislocating the visuals and altering the syntax, these images were cut from the narrative flow and countered with musical texts, plunging the viewer headlong into the very experience of TV – unveiling TV's stereotypical gestures of power and submission, of self-presentation and concealment, of male and female egos." These works often focus on the representation of women.

Buchloh says that in Dara Birnbaum's work he saw a real effort to use the means of American Pop art – structures of serialization and repetition informed by the heritage of Warhol and the formal heritage of minimalism "in order to construct a critical practice that confronts mass iconography and succeeds in rendering transparent the mechanisms at work in the ideological apparatus of television."[19]

A premise of Buchloh's analysis of the work of Birnbaum is that the artist stood 'outside' the media flow as an observer. This 'outside' position was again carried into 1980s, as media reuse or appropriation became a popular artistic strategy involving the direct duplication, copying or incorporation of an image (for example, painting or photograph) from an identified source, to represent it in a different context, altering its meaning. This practice of appropriation questioned notions of originality and authenticity. In the 1980s appropriation came to include the reinterpretation of images from fine art or mass media sources, and often the combining of various images derived from various sources. Many artists in the 1980s practised appropriation of some type, including Gretchen Bender, Barbara Kruger, Robert Longo and Cindy Sherman. In the work of Cindy Sherman we begin to see a change in the 'outside' position, as Sherman inserts herself into various mediated scenarios. The shift from artist as 'outsider' to being 'inside' the media flow began in a more conscious way in the 1980s, exemplified by Sherman's images. Something gave, and artists allowed themselves to see themselves as more or less, fully mediated.

why reuse media now?

Having seen, through this brief media survey that media reuse is temporally synonymous with mass media itself, we need to ask why the continued reuse of media in the present is relevant. To expose the system that created it now seems too simple a reading. To show how unstable the *mediated* meaning really is, is the line taken by authors Sianne Ngai and Nancy Shaw in their critique of Stan Douglas later in this chapter.[20] However, I argue that another way to think about this 'reuse' practice is most simply that such acts create something new. Running counter to the idea that media exist outside of us in something akin to a parallel universe, I will argue that media exist inside us and begins to constitute the way we think, what we become. A way to think about this relation of the viewer to the media was developed in *televisual terrain*, where it was also argued that media play a large role in constituting our very interface to the world. The media is the stuff we live amongst, that artists can use in their work along with other materials. Using it can be seen as a practical response to expand the field of material possibilities. Also, to isolate a media fragment from its flow – to wrench it from its propriety context – is a radical act as it gives us a moment to reflect on it, to perhaps see ourselves reflected there, and to remember a time when that media fragment did not exist. What we are now able to take is the longer view, particularly of televisual media, and this casts artists' reuse of all media in a new and different light.

When we look at Warhol's electric chair images now, we think of the time when the electric chair was a new thing. We are faced with a fragment which speaks to the past, and brings that past into being, again. In the usual understanding of time (and hence memory) as being linear, that is, with a before and an after, at some point the

development of a killing machine called the electric chair moved from outside, or the realm of the virtual, to punch through the veil into the actual – was relayed to mediated consciousness and became part of the interface from within which we viewed the world. By re-capturing the 'original' newspaper image as a silkscreen image, Warhol makes us remember now when we view the artwork that not only was the actual electric chair once a new thing, so was its image once a new, exotic thing, a singularity. As was the artwork.

Pop worked at this level of reverberation. It is not a simple reaffirmation of consumerism as has been sometimes argued.[21] The remediation strategy that Pop adopted exposed a tension in representation which has only deepened over time. This tension is one which Andreas Huyssen elaborates in the essay Pop Art Retrospective from the Documenta 1997 book:

> *….they were rather images of mass marketed consumer goods at a time when consumerism, marketing and advertising in the US had reached a heretofore unknown frenzy in the early sixties. In Roland Barthes' words, pop staged an object which was neither the thing nor its meaning, but its signifier. But it did this staging not by taking an existentialist, tortured or accusatory cast. American pop did not rebel against middle class society. It lacked the aggressive, often doctrinaire assault on aesthetic convention that had characterised an earlier European avant-garde and that resurfaced again in some forms of the post-1945 new avant-gardes. It refused any pedagogical mission, say, of debunking the media cliché as product and producer of false consciousness. Its preferred look at consumer objects was cool and aloof, self-consciously deadpan tinged with parody for those who chose to see it. ….Pop images were neither purely representational referring the spectator to the consumer object, nor were they*

ever purely simulacral referring merely to other images. In their apparent

celebration of Americana as undecidably referential and simulacral, they

registered a dimension of anxiety, melancholy, and loss that has perhaps

become more visible with the passing of time.[22]

I quote Huyssen at length here as I think that the tension he refers to is a key issue

faced by artists today. Referencing images which reference other images is not purely

simulacral. These images also jolt a viewer into remembering themselves, or the world,

at the time when that image was new, when that image was born.

The reception of Pop in Europe in the very early 1960s is of interest to this argument as

it underlies deep fissures in the idea of critical audience memory. As outlined in

televisual terrain, Australian televisual memory in general is more within the community

of the United States than it is in the European psyche. Given that the media is only ever

part of a machinic assemblage, this section of the Huyssen essay which discusses the

lost opportunity of European cultural critics when it came to Pop is relevant now:

.. this reductive condemnation of pop art represented a victory of a monolithically

negative view of capitalist culture over a more complex and differentiated

approach that insisted on the dialectical and emancipatory moments of culture

even under consumer capitalism. It is more than ironic that at a time when these

very same critics of pop extolled Benjamin's insights into the transformative role

of mechanical reproducibility in the arts, they so completely missed the fact that

pop actually rearticulated the Benjaminian problematic for the post World War 2

age. It was a leftist cultural nationalism combined with an anti Vietnam American

imperialism that blocked a more appropriate assessment …Pop as an art that did

not just reproduce originals, but that reproduced reproducibility and thus got to

the heart of capitalist commodity culture in the age of visual media. But it

reproduced reproducibility with a difference. This difference remains the bone of

contention. In Umberto Eco's words 'It is not longer clear whether we are

listening to a criticism of consumer language, whether we are consuming

consumer language, or whether we are consuming critical languages as

consumer languages.' Indeed it is not clear. And perhaps we are doing all of the

above at the same time. But would we know that without pop? [23]

Andreas Huyssen sheds light on historic differences of reuse between Europe and the

US. The key point (and its ramifications) that interests me in this essay is "Pop as an art

that did not just reproduce originals, but that reproduced reproducibility."[24]

The 'truth to materials' concerns of artists of the 1960s and 1970s were enhanced not

just by their opposition to the mass media but encouraged by Art Museums and funding

agencies alike, particularly the Rockefeller Foundation and the New York State

Council on the Arts (NYSCA), who were giving artists grants to work with video as early

as 1970. However there were already arguments around this focus on 'video purity' early

on, tensions which were to do with the medium's interdisciplinary potential, particularly in

regards performance and sculpture for example, or film for that matter. I read these

kinds of tensions as precursors to the kinds of issues artists are faced with today around

the multiplicity of media and how to respond to it. Not only do artists now see themselves

more *within* the flow of the media, but there is simply *more* of it – constituting a complex

network of historic and present-day media resonances and contagions.

::contagion::

In 2001 I was approached by the New Zealand Film Archive in Wellington to curate a selection of Australian new media art. The resulting show opened at the Archive in October, and was called *::contagion:: Australian media art @ the Centenary of Federation, 2001*. One thing that was clear to me from doing the curatorial research was that many Australian artists were adopting media reuse practices. Following Duchamp's strategy, reuse is akin to a practice of 'assisted readymades' in that it is media not yet recognized as art but waiting in the wings of the virtual to be somehow reborn as an art work.

There are some recent international exhibitions which deal exclusively with artists who reuse media. These include *FIDO Television*[25] curated by artist Omer Fast, and the *In Media Res: Information, Contre-Information*, the 2003 exhibition at the University of Rennes, France.[26] There are also exhibitions which focus on aspects of media influence on art practice, like the *tele[vision]* show curated by Joshua Decter[27] and *Notorious: Alfred Hitchcock and Contemporary Art*.[28]

The following writing will focus on works from the *::contagion::* exhibition which reuse media in some way. I will discuss the work of Kate Murphy, Andrew Gadow and Emil Goh in terms of translation. Also Richard Grant's *Maja*, *6 pm Personality* by Emile Zile, and *This Kind of Country* by Michael Schiavello which all take image fragments from an assortment of sources and feed them back into the machine for reprocessing, to then output new forms will also be examined. Through this process these new constructions

are able to offer varying levels of critique and exploration of the assumptions within the original media fragments.

The title of the 2001 show *::contagion::* derives from the logic that what you see alters you, however subtly. Two years later in 2003 Australian theorist McKenzie Wark declared 'contact is contagion'[29] and some of these works will show the relevance of this idea in regard to the mass media. Deleuze and Guattari write extensively about the idea of contagion: "Animal characteristics can be mythic or scientific. But we are not interested in characteristics; what interests us are modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling. I am legion. The Wolf-Man fascinated by several wolves watching him. What would a lone wolf be? Or whale, a louse, a rat, a fly?"[30]

In this section of Mille Plateaux they discuss contagion from the animate kingdom. My argument is an extension of this, to the human-machine kingdom, the animate-inanimate nexus. Their analogies are of use to thinking this emergence and the high levels of anxiety surrounding it:[31]

> *It is quite simple; everybody knows it, but it is discussed only in secret.*
> *….Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by*
> *heredity, even if the two themes intermingle and require each other. The vampire*
> *does not filiate, it infects. The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves*
> *terms that are entirely heterogenious: for example, a human being, an animal,*
> *and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a microorganism. Or in the case of a truffle,*
> *a tree, a fly, and a pig. These kingdoms are neither genetic or structural; they are*
> *interkingdoms, unnatural participations. That is the only way nature operates –*

against itself.… These multiplicities with heterogeneous terms, cofunctioning by

contagion, enter into certain assemblages…...[32]

Paradoxically of course our experience of animals is more and more via the media, particularly now that so many animals (and plants) are being made extinct: does *becoming animal* now imply *becoming media, vis-à-vis the animal channel?*

In *Remediation*,[33] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, like Foucault, are not interested in the origins of things. They are not interested in where things began or where they ended. Their interest is in 'affiliations' (the attachments and connections between things) and 'resonances' (the sympathetic vibrations between things). "Foucault…. characterized genealogy as 'an examination of descent', which 'permits the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept of the myriad events through which – thanks to which, against which – they were formed'."[34] Their proposed genealogy is defined by the formal relations within and among media as well as by relations of cultural power and prestige. Instead of "images of linear sequences and chains of events we need to think in terms of webs, clusters, boundaries, territories, and overlapping spheres as our images of historic process."[35]

In this age to cut up and reprocess as a tactic has lost much of its edge. As Mark de'Rozario argues: "…as both Ballard and Deleuze-Guattari have appreciated, that's why cut-up cannot be disruptive; it merely traces the postmodern capitalist ecumenon."[36] De'Rozario argues that Ballard, like Baudrillard, retains little enthusiasm for the political ambitions of the surrealists, whose celebration of the revolutionary power of the ludic and the random appears naive in an age where cut-up and associated techniques of juxtaposition are routinely deployed in even the most banal media object. He quotes

Baudrillard as saying: "The ludic is everywhere, even in the 'choice' of a brand of laundry detergent in the supermarket," and writes "Capital, Lyotard's 'surgeon of the cities' is the greatest cut-up artist of all, as McLuhan had realised, when he argued that newspapers were symbolist poems."[37]

Media reuse now needs to be smarter than the automatic writing techniques of past decades as well as simple versions of eighties appropriation. What these *::contagion::* artists are doing is operating at a sophisticated level of reverberation. They ricochet meanings around the text not just at the level of content but at the level of expression, the materiality of the medium that they are using, in all its *hall of mirrors.*

The artists discussed here recognize that we (and they) live inside the global media flow. This is the main difference that I see between the video artists discussed earlier in this chapter. These *::contagion::* artists are still very much exploring the materiality of their chosen media but in a context of more media than every before, and one which is rife with mediated resonances and contagions. These networks of media fibres weave an ever-more complex mediated reality.

Richard Grant accesses high-end video compositing to produce a reworking of what seem like found fragments of Super8 film recordings of a Japanese girl's birthday party and school concert. "For many people", writes curator from the Australian Centre of the Moving Image Emma Crimmings, "Super8 film has become synonymous with what they understand to be 'memory'. ….movements shift and change speed, and details of light, colour and texture, like memory itself are fleeting and ill defined."[38] This particular footage evokes a strange wistful nostalgia and comfort for the special magical space of childhood. However, we could be being deceived. Was it really shot on Super8 film or

was it just passed through an 'old film' filter in the digital environment? At the time of writing, an email from a video editing sales company popped into my inbox offering software called *Film Damage,* which simulates the appearance of old film stock. It claims that one can add scratches, grain particles, hair or fibers, and dirt, dust, or water spots. *Film Damage* also allows you to simulate camera shake and a flickering image. Another software on offer, *Film Grain* simulates the appearance of grain particles in the emulsion of movie or photo film.[39] Faked 'old film or glitch effect' is used increasingly in advertising as shorthand for the past, or our memory of it, whereas 'handheld video effect' refers to the idea that what is seen on the image is to do with real-life in the present. Lev Manovich writes extensively on digital fakery in his book *The Language of New Media.* You can be lied to and increasingly are so. Think of the hilarious 1997 film *Wag the Dog* in terms of how entire scenarios are faked. As Manovich writes: "Synthetic computer-generated imagery is not an inferior representation of our reality, but a realistic representation of a different reality."[40]

Many artists find this software fakery does not have the image texture that they seek in their work, and hence return to analog modes of production. In **::contagion::** Ian Andrews, with three short ambient video pieces *Jumpcut*, *Equilibrium* and *Departure* works with translation by superimposing a number of painted and decaying 16mm film loops, digital animation and video noise. As Andrews says: "the loops are combined by a video process known as a non-additive mix which gives the slowly moving textures a dreamlike painterly quality."[41] Andrews would claim that this process performed in the digital environment does not give the same *feel* as when it is performed in the analog edit suite.[42]

Another two artists' work in ***::contagion::*** were again to do with issues of translation: Emil Goh explores hard core machinic aesthetics in *Digital Feedback*, revisiting that old chestnut video feedback in the digital environment as opposed to the analog. Scott McQuire quotes Gary Hill interviewed in 1993 as saying "Video's intrinsic principle is feedback." McQuire elaborates that feedback "fitted in nicely with the rise of systems theory and cybernetics being advanced by those such as Norbert Weiner [sic] at the time."[43] Hill here is also speaking before the widespread availability of digital video systems.

Andrew Gadow performs a similar operation of material 're-translation' when he says the work *Inversion*: "utilises abstract video footage as the sound source. Essentially translating the sound of vision." In the *Art in Technological Times* San Francisco Museum of Modern Art catalogue Erik Davis writes "The secret sense of sharing helps to explain the growing desire to transcode the real, as when one signal source (Web traffic, a trumpet, the rate of rain forest loss) is translated into data that mutates into another form (3D forms, machine rhythms, articulations of a robot arm)."[44] What exactly happens in these events? Are the patterns and affects suggested by such processes part of the world, or simple artifacts of the criteria of translation?

Erik Davis discusses the idea of recoding briefly, but does not really go far enough. The problem is that the terms 'transcode' or 'conversion' imply a self-same replication. However what is happening here is more complex. Of course to merely 'translate' is impossible, and what seems to be happening in these works is more to do with emergence through a defined set of filters or parameters, which can be fixed or changed to different levels or can become random. In this way the works produced are deeply technological products, they owe their existence, their birth, to devices of capture and

reinterpretation. The transcoding is just a way to get another sense of the material, which reveals something new or unexpected. It is not about the equivalence of the original and its conversion, but about their difference. Australian media theorist Mitchell Whitelaw writes "it's often got to do with the idea of the signal or data itself ... piping it from one form to another is a way to reveal that aspect which is medium-independent, and therefore imperceptible (pure pattern of difference)."[45]

In Kuba Dorabialski's *Interview for Foreign Television*, the artist claims to have invented the language of the piece. The title itself begs the question, what is 'foreign' about the television station – foreign to what? What language are they speaking? It appears to be based on an eastern European language but nothing seems recognizable. The 'language' of the interview is subtitled in English.[46] In this dominantly English speaking Australia we grew used to seeing imported cultural cinema product subtitled, so it is no surprise that this translation tactic should reveal itself somewhere in contemporary Australian moving image making (one I put to use in my own work **eurovision**). In fact such a strategy is becoming increasingly apparent in Australian advertising. For a while now there have been the ads for pasta sauce spoken in the Italian language, and in mid-2003 one for a mop appeared in Russian with English subtitles.

Julianne Pierce, director of ANAT points out that "Performance is also a strong area at the moment, especially amongst younger female artists, who are working with performance and video installations."[47] Narrative, performance and story-telling is present in the extraordinary machinic assemblage that is Kate Murphy's video installation *Brittaney Love*. It focuses on an eleven year old girl called Brittaney Love from Glasgow, recorded by the artist when in Scotland for a residency, who has completely incorporated the idea of the reuse of media as she 'becomes' the media

fiction that is Britney Spears. All that she knows about Spears is filtered through the media – there are no other channels leading to the singer. Brittaney Love has in a way been possessed by her icon – her media superstar – from the way she speaks and sings, the way she dances to what she wears. She dreams of being Britney and by doing so, becomes Britney. This is all made doubly weird by the fact that she is already and was always, a variation of 'Britney'.

A work in **::contagion::** which, as Deleuze and Guattari write: "Like hybrids, which are themselves sterile, born of a sexual union that will not reproduce itself, but which begins over again every time, gaining that much more ground"[48] is *This Kind of Country* by Michael Schiavello. It takes an advertisement broadcast on television about the Federation of Australia[49] and remakes it to create a new thing. The success of the work is to do with the disruptive nature of the restaging, an effect of the choices the artist makes in what he has decided to insert into the original text. The new work tells the somewhat unpalatable story about the destruction of Aboriginal people and wildlife on the Australian continent since invasion. It cuts up and adds into the advertisement a voice-over and images speaking new facts, the kinds of facts that tend to get cut out in the whitewashing of Australian history. It is successful because the new elements are very particular selections. In this way it is more akin to what has been called 'the video essay' in that, through its selection it presents an *argument* as well as a new way of reading the old media fragment.[50]

Emile Zile is a Melbourne artist drawn to an off-the-wall kind of artist activism. For **::contagion::** I selected his work *6 pm Personality*. This was a succession of news readers, anchors and correspondents with half of their face as image negative. It was relatively simple but macabre. The sound was a low mumbling of voices saying nothing

in particular. The work was shown on a horizontal band of five monitors in the foyer. As monitors showing normal television services are now commonplace in banks, for example, the placement of this work in an area where one might expect to see monitors confused expectations not just with its content – the sick newsreaders – but, due to the horizontal line of five monitors, with its repetition (also a classic strategy of Pop). By taking fragments of the media and reworking them, Zile made a new thing.

I will focus a little more on the work of artist Emile Zile. A recent Zile work is a looping video sequence of a plane crashing into NY's Twin Towers. The voice over is a sound piece of someone in a nearby office gasping 'holy cow' (also the title of the work). What is unusual about this work is that the image itself is a reshoot of a quicktime movie on a screen, but the quicktime is at an angle. This movie was more than likely taken off the internet, with its audio, and here is reproduced and translated as video. The texture of the various media is therefore apparent and exaggerated and has a peculiar effect on the subject matter. The Twin Towers were of course, Big Things. Zile, by reshooting them from a tiny, low-res internet-delivered image stream, and showing the computer screen clearly within the final frame, plays havoc with scale – the work says as much about media itself and its materiality as it does about the attack on the Twin Towers.

Emile Zile is an artist who is making a practice of making new things from reuse of media. *Larry Emdur's Suit*, 2002 (Appendix: Image page A) is a good example. It tells the story of Emile, answering the call to take up seats on the shooting of an episode of the television quiz show *The Price Is Right*, finding himself in the situation where he is a contestant. In this role he does well and guesses the price of the nursery package, allowing him to get up on stage with host Larry Emdur. Emile is a large person, Larry Emdur is not. The hysterical scene that follows after Emile is asked to come to the stage

arise from Emile's overblown hand gestures, knee bending, arm waving and rhythmic entanglings. Emile does a kind of dance on his way to the stage which Larry loves and in fact tries to emulate. When Emile reaches the stage Larry sets in motion a dance which Emile enhances and then leads, the two of them involved in a mutual tango. The audience is in stitches, loving it. Emile effectively bends the materiality of television to his will, making Larry follow his dance. It is hilarious and very, very strange. It reverberates with what Huyssen said about Pop, and also the way Decter suggests in Chapter 1 that artists could work in collaboration with television (though in this case the collaborative nature of the work wasn't mutual).

What occurs between the artist and the game show host has something of the relationship of the orchid and wasp about it as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari:

> *The orchid deterritorialises by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp: but the wasp reterritorialises on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialised, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproduction apparatus. But it reterritorialises the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome. ….At the same time something entirely else is going on; not imitation at all but a capture or code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming wasp of the orchid and a becoming orchid of the wasp….the apparallel evolution of two beings who have absolutely nothing to do with each other.[51]*

Emile and Larry 'became' some new entity, albeit momentarily. The segment continues, however Emile does not guess the right price of the vacuum cleaner and has to leave the stage, game over. Larry looks positively bereft for a moment of televisual time as

Emile exits. Outside he is informed that he can pick up the nursery package at a warehouse after three weeks.

The way that Zile has cut the piece is what makes it so entertaining. Using the actual broadcast taped from home sometime later, he has added a voice-over of his feelings about the experience of sudden celebrity, followed by the all too sudden crash as he is expelled from the show. He uses relatively simple video edits and effects to make certain aspects stand out and to highlight the lonely tragedy of the consumer goods on offer, the poignant moments of the relationship between Larry and Emile, and the shopping mall glamour of the women hosts in evening gowns.

Zile says of his work:

> I hope to excavate deeper levels of meaning in the material than the immediately audiovisual, by re-animating that material in another context, often in live performance – a manipulation of the multiple perspectives of one event; and magnifying the intersections of personal, social and televised history. I am obsessed by the individual frame that separates a home video from an international news item.[52]

Zile wanted to broadcast *Larry Emdur's Suit* on a special festival program for young artists called "The Noise" on the ABC and the show tried to get 'clearance' from production company Grundy. They were against it being shown – the Noise Festival asked Zile if he would bear the legal responsibilities of permitting it to be broadcast which he did. In the end Zile's segment for the Noise show included a sequence from *The Price is Right* game show minus the image of the host Mr. Larry Emdur himself –

they cut him out of the frame and he isn't mentioned in the TV spot. Zile writes that this passed ABC's legal team after a few weeks of deliberation and nervous telephone calls.[53] Not only does this show a lack of a sense of humour but demonstrates how timid Australian institutions have become when it comes to issues of intellectual property and copyright. Two stories highlight the culture of self-censorship prevalent in Australia today. This is a critical issue for artists who wish to delve into the new mediated nature.

copyright conflicts

Both the following instances relate to pieces shown in Sydney Biennales. The first was in the 1996 show curated by the Dia Center in New York's Lynn Cook, a video work by French artist Claude Closky. In the work shown at Artspace Closky bumped together a whole lot of traveling shots from trailers for movies hired from the local video store. What you saw was an endless shot moving *into* space. It was an incredible work, relating as it did to Virilio's idea of *dromoscopy* (an aesthetics of disappearance, of unstable forms) – the relation of looking through the windscreen while driving at speed. At the artist's talk at the Art Gallery of NSW all the questions focused on his use of these images as an abuse of Intellectual Property (IP). Claude Closky appeared astounded, as if he had never previously had to deal with such timidity before the media law.

The second story relates to another artist's talk at the most recent Sydney Biennale curated by Richard Grayson. It featured the Salon de Fleurus which in the 1980s had realized several projects based on the idea of reconstructions of works of art and importantly, their sites of realization, from the avant-garde tradition. The 'originals'

showing in Sydney as part of 'Fiction Reconstructed' were *The Last Futurist Exhibition* by Kazimir Malevich in 1915, *The Armory Show* from 1913, and reproductions of works from the collections of Gertrude and Leo Stein initiated in 1905-06 in Paris. The Sydney Salon was curated by Slovenian artist and writer Marina Griznic. Some of the reworked paintings on show were signed, but perhaps with different names or with other details added, for example "Kazimir Malevich, from Belgade" which is of course, not so.

Similar stagings by Salon de Fleurus of the sites critical to the Western conception and development of modern art have been held in Belgrade and also in a private apartment in New York.

In the catalogue essay Griznic says:

> *What we have here are copies….. but copies containing the physical content of each painting and much more – the idea itself and the act of copying are equally significant. Questions such as the relation between the original and the copy, truth and falsehood, sense and non-sense, are legitimate subjects for philosophical discussion. These are actually anti-historical works. Copies exist in their own right and time: they do not necessarily originate from an opposition between themselves and the original, nor do they refer directly to pictorial invention. This suggests a completely anti-historical reading which does not believe in the disappearance of things, in a linear genealogy, or in homogenous time without interruptions. The copy confronts us with forms of historicity and/or anti-historicity, of the visual and the virtual/cyber world.[1]*

Having written this text, Griznic was then confronted in the artist talk by questions not to do with philosophy and the logic of the copy, but to do with issues of copyright and intellectual property. Was she aware that the artists were infringing copyright? asked some moral majority. Griznic's response was typical of her sense of humour (here, paraphrased) "What we are doing here is giving new life to the work. As it is, the originals can't travel, they are stuck in dusty museums somewhere, under wraps, heavily insured, dying. We bring them back into the world. They travel to exotic places and meet all sorts of wonderful people. They live, again."

In 2002 the same questions arose from the Australian audience as in 1996, questions that I don't believe would occur to European art audiences.

In chapter 1 I wrote that televisual virtual communities of television watchers are deeply geographic and historic. "Such communities come to bear the weight of specific 'audience memory' though ironically, in an Orwellian doublethink manner, such communities have also to bear the weight of historical amnesia."[54] We do remember what we hear and see in the media, at a deep perhaps unconscious level. Is it that we aren't meant to be that conscious of it? Why is it so dangerous to recall it, to re*present* it, that is, to make it live again in the present? Artists have a history of doing precisely this.

At present copyright expires seventy years after a person dies, but this is often now being extended. European, UK and the Australian copyright laws aren't as flexible as the US copyright laws. The former gives preference to the first creator not the second, to protect the first creator. The US has the parody law enshrined in the constitution which allows satire. For instance the Simpsons could probably never be made in Australia.

However artists discussed in this dissertation are not primarily engaged in parody or satire. Instead, it is critique, and follows a long history within the art tradition.

If we are living inside the legal framework, then let's think in legal terms. 'Fiduciary' relates to the relationship between a trustee and the person or body for whom the trustee acts. It could be argued that artists (if they so chose) have a fiduciary responsibility to reuse media if nothing else than to their discipline, the history of art, not to mention the community of those that appreciate art. This is demonstrated and argued here.

Philip Williams' spatialities

In a completely different way to the reproduced acculturated space of the Salon de Fleurus at the Sydney Biennale comes the installation by artist Philip Williams *approaching silence* which opened at the Casula Powerhouse in Sydney in June 2003.

I include it in my discussion here as it acts as a counter to other acculturated spaces, yet speaks to the impossibility of having an ideal or unadulterated access to nature, now that we live inside *technologically mediated* nature. This work and those like it also have resonances with ideas discussed in *screenworld*. One can image that artists will work increasingly to develop spatial simulations using the large screen environments of architectural media space.

When you step into *approaching silence* maybe you think what happened? Did something happen here? Where is this place? You look up, there are clouds, but of course you are not looking up but someone was, once, from somewhere, through a lens. A train passes and it sounds familiar to where you are now. A bellbird sings, and somewhere there is a murmur of people, of crickets, of river life.

All of these visual and audio instances happened in an indeterminate zone around Casula Powerhouse. What Phil Williams has assembled is a quote of a time and a place, a record – the derivation of the word *record* is to go back to the heart, as *cor*, is heart. At some stage, he looked up to the clouds, he moved closer, to the water tanks, he stayed still, focusing on the pond. He framed the world, quite specifically. Williams, who mainly works in sound, pressed record on the minidisk to catch birdsound and trainsound, to capture them and take them from their place in time, enabling them to then exist in a new place in time.

The recorded nature of this 'nature' is what we have here, an apparatus capture of an indeterminate zone in time and place. It is not authentic as such, things have been manipulated. It references the historic body of work which aims to freeze the passing of time via the apparatus of capture, the camera. The newly floodlit Empire State Building was treated by Warhol in what began a series of acts of media reuse and contagion. On 25 July, 1964 Warhol and others went to the 44th floor of the Time Life Building and at 8.06pm began *filming* on a borrowed 16mm Auricon camera until 2.42 am. The idea for the work *Empire* was actually from a young filmmaker called John Palmer, who helped with the filming.[55] Douglas Gordon made a *video* simulation of this work in his *Bootleg Empire* (1997). New York artist Wolfgang Staehle created an *internet* Empire State work, *Empire 24/7* (discussed in Chapter 4). What the Empire State Building was to progress

and futurity, the image of collapsing Twin Towers will be to the contemporary age of fear and paranoia.

Something in *approaching silence* is also resonant with Japanese video works from the eighties, or the meditative work of Australian video artist Joan Brassil, both which seem to focus on 'the natural world' as if the camera was a necessary evil and was getting in the way of that access to (the memory of) a place. However the devices here are significant to the work's materiality and texture – as are the devices of projection within the installation.

What is the (ontological) status of the seemingly random though strangely familiar world Williams creates here? What is its relation to another world, an old world, or is it a new world, one of many? And as you walk about in the space, do you see a face in the clouds, do you hear the train whistle go, does that remind you of something, and then next to you another person in the space, in their heart, their *cor*, they are not looking that cloud way when the train whistle goes, instead they focus on the wires leaving the frame of the water tower, and then a plane sounds overhead, and perhaps they think of connections, and maybe also, of disconnections.

Ideas of inside and outside are held within the installation also. Inside we see this constructed world and it relates to an outside quite close, and a time nearby. But where or when exactly has passed and all there are now are the traces, the remnants, the artifacts and algorithms assembled and crafted so carefully by the artist. From this approach, silence is multiplicity.

As *approaching silence* is a transplanted 'natural space', the Salon de Fleurus quoted an acculturated space in time by referencing the history of painting, and American artist David Reed reworked a filmic space with his installation *Scottie's Bedroom* (1994). Reed who trained and mainly works as a painter, has engaged in a significant dialogue with technology, unlike most painters of his generation. The installation is a reproduction of the bedroom from Hitchcock's film *Vertigo*, except in this one a TV screen plays *Vertigo* in an endless loop. Reed has inserted his own painting into the film in both the actual film on playback on the screen, and into the reproduction of the room on the wall.

Another instance of spatial forwards/backwards, real-life to media (here, television), is the Melbourne exhibition of the Tokyo-based group Candy Factory. They transported the entire set of the internationally famous Australian soap Neighbours to the Australian Centre for Photography, where it sat for the duration of the exhibition – a tawdry, empty thing. In terms of these works' authenticity, Phil Williams' was 'real' nature, the Salon de Fleurus was 'real' – known only by photographs and written accounts, David Reeds' was known from the 'real' piece of film, whereas Candy Factory's was all too real, a complete transplant, a total recall lying in wait for events to unfold.

In another act of media infiltration, of going backwards and forwards in media zones, LA artist Mel Chin and the GALA Group introduced more than 150 conceptual artworks into the primetime drama series Melrose Place during the eighties. At one stage, the GALA group held an exhibition of works which had been used in Melrose Place, and the producers shot a sequence of the show in the gallery with some of the characters discussing the artworks which had previously appeared in the show. In a similar vein, the South African artists' collective The Trinity Sessions with their exhibition *mobile office* in June 2000[56] featured a television set playing a scene from the reality show *Big Brother.*

The Trinity Sessions curated the collection of contemporary South African art which was in the *Big Brother* house, and this collection returned to be part of another exhibition via *Big Brother* playing on the screen. The collection has also become the subject of a glossy coffee table book. Such collaborations between artists and the machine of television production are what is called for by curator Joshua Decter as a way forward. As the aforementioned Zile case attests these are not always welcome.

Stan Douglas: reuse by resonance and contagion

How artists can best work within the television frame is a question that has changed over time as the very televisual world has changed. There are numerous ways of referencing media in the practice, which can proceed by resonance and contagion, rather than direct reuse.

I will now focus on the contemporary Canadian artist Stan Douglas who in 1991 made a series of thirty or sixty second works, *Monodramas*, for television. They were for broadcast in between commercials and this indeed did happen. In the shadow of Samuel Beckett, they show various open-ended scenarios – people running down alleys, others sitting on benches, talking about moving but not doing so, or a man spying something from a balcony and checking it out in the bush below. Each piece presented what might be the germ of a dramatic situation – but one that does not unfold. Instead the television audience was left with a puzzle as the next commercial arrived.

In 2000 the Los Angeles Museum of Modern Art had a retrospective of Stan Douglas's work and as part of this they showed a 1967 CBC Vancouver docudrama called *The Clients*. Of particular interest here was an episode titled "A Game of Rounders" which focused on an angry parolee working as a security guard in 'Discount World', a downtown Vancouver store. At a heated moment, the question is asked of the security guard: "Did you or didn't you punch somebody out at Discount World?" As George Wagner suggests "the answer is not as important as the tenor of the question and the suggestion that the world in question, and its values, are not contained with the boundaries of a single retail establishment."[57]

The Clients offered a gritty picture of Vancouver. It did not abide by the conventions of television at the time, characterized as the show was by long takes, the absence of master shots and the inarticulateness of leading characters. It is this 1967 series that inspired Stan Douglas with his 1988 *Win Place or Show*. It references a televisual version of Vancouver kept alive in *The Clients*, a media acculturated space in time (the 1960s) in its look and in the construction of narrative and style.

The Douglas work is a kind-of extension of *The Clients*, which is a very real televisual artefact. *Win Place or Show*, 1998 (Appendix: Image page B) is a hybrid which "begins over again every time, gaining that much more ground"[58] as it moves to further explore the workings of narrative structure in contemporary television soap opera and drama. A whole world of possible combinations is presented by Douglas, a cycling through of this path or that path for the two featured characters, as one nugget of possible reality follows another, resolving with the fight. Always the same arguments but this time a different line of initial attack, a different aside, a different snide remark, all leading to the fisticuffs fight, then starting over. The work unfolds in an interchangeable or seemingly-

in-any-sequence manner. However on a longer viewing the way Douglas unfolds the work is highly organized.

The action is set in a large housing block, like a dormitory for single men derived from those proposed for the development of a working class downtown area of Vancouver in the 1950s called Strathcona. Such dormitories were meant to serve the needs of the port and respond to the presence of a population of male labourers in Vancouver, who were employed in the regional forestry and fishing industries. Douglas here presents a memory of a history which never transpired, as the Strathcona dormitory project was never built.

George Wagner writes: "The line between sanity and madness has been said to exist in the ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality, and it is in this territory that *Win Place or Show* unfolds."[59] These two men tell jokes, bet on the races, try to engage in conversation, and fight. They are like caged animals in the small claustrophobic space they seem to have to share. They don't have a television in the apartment, which is interesting for its absence. As noted by Raymond Williams, the suburban single-family dwelling, the nuclear family and television became integral in the reshaping of social space, assumed to 'anchor' a postwar world undergoing significant change.[60] Williams writes that television mediated the relationship between private suburban space of the nuclear family and the mobility unleashed by the forces of urbanisation, industrial development and growing media infrastructures. It was celebrated for its ability to reconcile growth and change with social order and cultural belonging. At a safe distance, homeowners could receive news of other people, places, and times – leaving them unchallenged by cultural difference and social strife.[61] So with no television in their space Douglas positions these characters as being outside of social acceptance.

On *Win Place or Show*, Stan Douglas has written: "the camera is inflected by me but it presents more than me, even though I put this thing together and I take responsibility for it….. I want to talk about the possibilities of meaning that these forms and situations present, rather than about myself."[62]

What one sees in the gallery space are two huge screens. An apartment is shown as the setting for the drama of two working men characters, one older than the other. Shot from twelve different camera angles, Douglas' takes are cut together in realtime by a computer during the exhibition, generating an almost endless series of montages, since every time a scene repeats it repeats differently. Curator Lynne Cooke describes the effect: "The fractured and fissured representations that result range across the spectrum, from an almost seamless illusion to a doubled image, to two completely contradictory views."[63] She argues that in this way Douglas not only deconstructs the conventions and values integral to the style, the genre, the medium, and even the art form he employs but, by highlighting devices of disidentification, "foregrounds the conditions and terms of spectatorship and, by extension, indicts as false any encompassing ideology." [64]

In an essay on this work, "Site/Stake/Struggle" authors Sianne Ngai and Nancy Shaw expand on this latter point. They argue that, reflecting a late '60s turn from phenomenological to sociopolitical analysis of media practices, the frequently cited argument in these discussions is that narrative forms of commercial broadcast depend on:

> ….'unseen apparatuses of enunciation', whose concealment must be maintained
> in order to insure the imaginary identifications conferring continuous and stable

forms of subjectivity to viewers, and in order to sustain an overall sense of

fictional plenty and coherence, always covering over the structuring losses

(multiple cuts, negations and exclusions) that constitute the representation to

begin with. For some theorists, the implication then is that by disclosing

previously effaced signs of production, or simply reshifting emphasis from the

fiction to the level of enunciation, one manages to circumvent 'the basic

cinematic apparatus's ideological effects' – an assumption complicated by

Althusser's insistence that there can be no 'outside' ideology, regardless of how

strongly the disjunction is stressed between levels of enunciated content and

enunciation by laying bare processes of representation.[65]

They go on to argue that this very lack of an 'outside' to ideology, or the vast and

intricately interconnected abstract systems (economic, political, representational)

determining 'the subject' as such, is for Douglas the starting point from which the

reconfiguration of determining contexts becomes possible.

Moreover, the often automatic recourse to unmasking this supposedly consistent

level of discourse becomes somewhat a moot procedure in Win, Place or Show;

in a sense there is nothing to disclose or unearth here, because nothing is buried

or hidden. Rather, apparatus of enunciation are exposed and visible to begin

with, displayed on the work's very surface.[66]

Later in this essay the authors note that the 'nickel' and 'fight' scenes have more than

double the number of montage variations (per text) than the first four sections: eight

possibilities versus three. With greater potential for nonoverlapping shots at these

narrative junctures, Douglas increases the likelihood for the vertical seam between the

two projections role to change: from its initial function as a locus of division, or partition separating two enclosed, clearly demarcated interior spaces, to a dislocation at the center where dropped nickels and the bodies of tired workers seem prone to vanish, no longer locatable by any coordinates within the system itself. In this way they argue "the lone room that Don and Bob inhabit – a closed interior that, like ideology seems to have no real 'outside' is nevertheless at the same time nothing *but* outside; a site that paradoxically externalizes itself through the very process of delimiting its internal spaces."[67]

In what ways could it be said that Douglas is reusing media in *Win Place or Show*? Clearly it is not a direct reuse but has more to do with the idea of contagion and resonance, rather than images of linear sequences and chains of events: "….we need to think in terms of webs, clusters, boundaries, territories, and overlapping spheres as our images of historic process."[68]

The case studies to date have looked at media fragments with length, that is, fragments which take a few minutes or hours and media which occupy a definite historic space and time. Working back from that, I will examine a piece which uses still images collected over a ten year period linked together to create a seven minute piece, then later will discuss the reuse of the mediated still image by itself.

Janos Sugar

For some ten years Hungarian artist Janos Sugar has been collecting newspaper and magazine images of the Russian-built gun the Kalashnikov. He describes the process of

collecting particular images as 'collecting analogies.' For instance, he takes a picture

whenever he sees a broken shop window, or religious graffiti, or a piece of furniture on

the street. He likes such series of images, connected only by a similar detail; he says

that they represent a special kind of a narrative. "For me it is all about the

foreground/background issue: what we consider important, the foreground, is only a

pretext and with the passing of time the former background becomes more interesting."[69]

The Kalashnikov machine gun has been in constant use since the late 40s. In these fifty-

five years approximately 70 million Kalashnikov have been built and have killed more

people than the atomic bomb. Its silhouette has become the symbol of revolt and the

favourite logo of freedom fighters and terrorists. Sugar says that in Burkina Faso the

Kalashnikov for some years was part of the national coat of arms, and Mozambique

pictures the Kalashnikov with an open book and a spade on the national flag.[70]

In 1995 the artist already had a large collection of Kalashnikov images, but no access to

the proper hardware to do much with them. At the time he experimented with morphing

the images, but the results were clumsy and process complicated. Only six years later

technology had developed to such an extent that such a simple work could be realised.

The Typewriter of the Illiterate is the work that emerged from morphing the still images

together. Janos scanned all the images then matched them in terms of the size and

position of the gun, and morphed these together using the gun as the target in each

morph. What this does is create incredible movement and effects akin to 3D on a 2D

image plane, as one image seems to 'pull through' the other. The images are startling in

their range. Recalling Janos' practice of 'collecting analogies,' the gun was the initial

reason for the repetition. However what is really interesting is the background, the

repetition of a certain look of defiance on the faces of the people proudly holding their iconic Kalashnikovs.

When the morphing software was advanced enough, the work could be made in the way the artist envisaged it. This example demonstrates the fact that certain technologies allow new realities to be seen, or freshly seen, from which new ways of being in the world can emerge. As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, artworks can enable this process. Vilem Flusser, speaking in 1975 of this ability of art to show us how various media technologies work, stressed the importance of this act, "because from a new vision can result a new action."[71] One of the new actions possible is to see the significance of a particular international killing machine, the Kalashnikov, as Andy Warhol's reworking did of the media image of the electric chair in its time.

Pat Hoffie

I will now address the reuse of the still image. Pat Hoffie has recently done a series *Fully Exploited Labour*, 1993 to present (Appendix: Image page C), featuring images of The Tampa, the children overboard, Woomera and the sinking of the Sieve X – images burned into Australians' memory. Or are they? Apparently a large majority of Australians believe that they were lied to over the children overboard affair, however this has not had a negative effect on the popularity of John Howard as Prime Minister.

Brisbane artist Hoffie tapes the images from television (from the ABC's *Four Corners*, to be precise) and then makes a computer print-out of the image. She then sends this to

the Galicia family in the Philippines who grid them up, paint them on large banners and send them back to Australia. Here again is another instance of technology enabling certain realities to be seen, or freshly seen. Hoffie is using video capturing devices, data transfer, compression algorithms and digital printing to realize what appears to be a relatively simple work. Hoffie says that it would be easy to have the images enlarged by technological means but the fact that they have been have been outsourced off-shore is part of the kind of global trading that makes entire communities – entire nations – leave their place of birth in search of more equitable possibilities. She says "the manufacture of the work is both the subject of the work as it is the means."[72]

Hoffie says in an interview with Alison Caroll that she was surprised when a curator referred to her work as 'protest art.' The curator's comment here is telling in the context of the dissertation and relevant not only for issues of Intellectual Property but for notion of propriety in our day and age. The children overboard images were extensively reproduced in the media, yet to pluck them from out of their context and re-present them is immediately labeled 'protest' art. Hoffie says "I see this particular body of work as merely and openly factual. These images are reporting a particular moment in Australia."[73] She adds that they say as much about our values today as a Streeton view of unpeopled paddocks might have said about the national aspirations of the time.

The image of the sinking refugee boat has become an icon for a number of Australian artists, as Alison Carroll points out. For example, Melbourne artists Jon Cattapan and Charles Green & Lyndell Brown have also used it. The community of Australians know and understand what it means. However the Galicia family who did the actual painting did not know the image and turned it into an image of 'Christ on the Sea of Galilee' in accord with their own store of iconography. Questioned as to how much people need to

know about the image, Hoffie responds: "the act of translation is always embroidered with little glitches and approximations. Its often very telling and I suspect in many cases the mistranslations are willing ones."[74] However, for the images to end up so biblical she says "the Philippines is saturated with Christian imagery and the very airwaves are permeated with the possibilities of apparitions, miracles and magic every day."

This example of the Galicia family's interpretation of Pat Hoffie's image selection, digitized from an Australian television current affairs program, and posted to them as a printed image, demonstrates what is to come as media reuse become more globally prevalent. As media flows themselves attempt increased homogenisation, art works will be developed with singular takes on mediated events based on local modes and characteristics. Let a million flowers bloom.

Jamie Waag

Of particular interest to this argument is the work of UK artist Jamie Wagg who has discovered what can and can't be spoken. Over recent years he has sought to explore issues around the validity or relevance of a critical practice with regards to History Painting. This is seen in the tradition of an historicising disaffirmative practice in the 'Grand Manner.'[75] This body of work first came to the public's attention in 1993-94, with the work dealing with the surveillance images of the abduction and murder of the 2 year old James Bulger by two 10 year old boys in Liverpool, England.

In the case of the Bulger murder, Jamie Wagg's *History Painting* of the security camera photograph were removed from the Whitechapel Gallery's Open Exhibition after prolonged attack by the tabloids in 1994. The images were already rendered unforgettable through their exposure in the news media, yet their reproduction outside of that arena was considered an 'outrage.'

In an essay analysing the furore around Wagg's paintings in 1996 Mark Cousins notes that:

> *The work seeks to set the image of the boys in a public space of memory which does not repeat identification but works through them. It is a work in search of a public sphere in which canonic images are set within the historical and political conditions of their emergence. It is probably right that the newspapers expressed such outrage, for the work challenges the space of representation and identification within which newspapers coin it.* [76]

How is it that the surveillance images of the Bulger abduction, themselves shown incessantly on television and in other media outlets, were, when reproduced in the context of art, the subject of outrage. This example, and that of Emile Zile's *Larry Emdur's Suit* suggest that although we live inside media we are not to reproduce and by doing so, critique mediaspace, in any form. These examples are precursors to the discussion to come in the next chapter *netspace* around webcam and surveillance images. Robert Riley, in conversation with Joshua Decter says of television images, resonating with both print, surveillance and webcam images, that television is a medium that migrates: "….. images wander off the screen into the memory, to become a public presence….. The engineered space of television certainly impacts perception and vision. Simulated experiences on television are experiences none the less."[77]

media reuse now

Having here looked at some examples of artists' reuse of media, what is it that artists do when they take up media and reuse it? Joshua Decter writes that "I actually believe that the model of artists 'unpacking' media culture for us (as critical service providers) is becoming increasingly obsolete, as the public is becoming increasingly media-savvy"[78] (though the recent example of the Iraq War discussed in chapter 1 would suggest otherwise.) He suggests that this model will be supplanted by a more complex and difficult approach: artists working in cooperation with networks and cable providers to articulate "hybrid projects that offer new interpenetrations between mainstream commercial desires and the more idiosyncratic visions of artists." He cites the previously mentioned Mel Chin & the Gala Committee's in the *Name of the Place* wherein an art collective at first infiltrated the set of Melrose Place and subsequently developed a cooperation with the show's producers, as an example of a 'trans-cultural' project. Collaboration here as advocated by Decter is all very well but it requires that artists institutionalize themselves. As mentioned in the discussion around Emile Zile, working in an unofficial collaborative way with Grundy Television, when they found out they threatened to set their legal team onto him. It is my opinion that this increasingly 'legal' framework slows artists down way too much.

In the 1970s artists were seen to be critiquing the power structures of media control by deconstructing it, showing the skeletons embedded within the machine. Later artists reused media at the level of media memory and reverberation. Sianne Ngai and Nancy Shaw argue that an artist like Stan Douglas goes beyond the simple deconstruction mode to show how deeply unstable the media edifice is.

As this critique from Tim Griffin on the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale exemplifies, media reuse grows in stature with the 'long view:'

> *The pavilion's centerpiece inspired a similarly uncanny sensation, turning on the element of nostalgia (the ultimate 'delay') that tinged so many works in the Biennale: an entire room of selections from Richard Prince's 'Cowboys' series. The Marlboro Man imagery of the imagined West is stunningly seductive, and all the more striking given that Prince continued the series, so powerfully identified with the '80s, over the course of two decades. One wonders if Prince isn't America's own kind of Wagner, a figure able to frame the nation's unconscious fantasies – everything that you want to embrace that is, at the same time, everything you want to deny. Or, to add some simulacral spice to this country logic, he evokes the proverb You can't lose what you never had.[79]*

What is interesting now in media reuse (and it is only now perhaps since television has been with us for over forty years) is that we can make a leap into the past, in order to remember what things were like, and that this is in itself a radical act. In this age of greater speed and intensity, it feels as if we are inside a continuous present. The aim of television and media in general is this. To live in a *future perfect* tense. The world of the past is more and more synthesized and collapsed, over time iconised into manageable units soaked in *maximum audience memory*. Ron Simmons, curator at the Museum of Television and Radio in New York writes: "If you see Ernie Kovacs,[80] Sid Caesar, Playhouse 90, Paddy Chayefsky on television, it is guaranteed to be in highlight packages. Movie and literary history remains available in its complete and unadulterated form. Television history is being reduced to smaller and quicker sound bites."[81]

This chapter has demonstrated that there have been two significant shifts in media art practice since the introduction of video in the 1960s. The first is that media artists changed their focus from speaking from a position outside the media to one which came from inside the media flow. An example of the earlier idea is the late 1970s work of artist Dara Birnbaum, which sought to *deconstruct* the media. A work speaking from the latter perspective is *Brittaney Lov*e by Kate Murphy, showing an 11year old girl who is completely consumed by her mediated desires.

Paralleling this shift were the implications on classic modernist notions of truth to materials from what Bolter and Grusin call *remediation*, which they see as a defining characteristic of new media. They argue that media are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other, and this process is integral to media. They claim that "Media need each other in order to function as media at all."[82] The works examined here act by ways of affiliation, resonance and contagion, and the next chapter will expand on this as it looks at media reuse on the internet. A subtheme of this chapter has been the status of the image as representation. This was highlighted by Pop art and this issue is only made more complex by the increasingly sophisticated mediated world.

Artists, by manipulating the media we are subjected to, are expanding the contracting media memory as well as opening new spaces of dialogue around media issues. Copyright as determined by media corporations can only hinder this activity and hence must be resisted, if nothing else, arguing from a base of the history of art itself, and its ongoing critique of the media we live within.

[1] Vilem Flusser, "Fred Forest or the destruction of the established points of view" December 1975 (cited July 7 2003) http://www.webnetmuseum.org/html/en/expo-retr-fredforest/auteurs/flusser_en.htm#text

[2] Steina Vasulka quoted in "Notes Toward a History of Image-Processed Video: Eric Siegel, Stephen Beck, Dan Sandin, Bill and Louise Etra," by Lucinda Furlong. Afterimage 11:1&2 (Summer 1983), pg 35, quoted in Marita Sturken "Paradox in the Evolution of an Art Form: Great Expectations and the Making of a History" (essay cited online 5 April 2003) www.bavc.org/preservation/dvd/resources/essays.htm

[3] Patricia Mellancamp, "Eternal Frame" (cited online July 2003) http://www.bavc.org/preservation/dvd/resources/extras/mellencamp2.pdf

[4] http://www.radicalsoftware.org/ (cited online 5 June 2003)

[5] Excerpt from the Electronic Arts Intermix site, where there is also a link to a video clip of the work (cited online 5 April 2003) http://www.eai.org/eai/tape.jsp?itemID=1823

[6] Gianni Romano, "The future is under construction," *Media Connection,* Edizioni Scheiwiller, Milano 2001 book + cd rom (cited online 5 June 2003) http://www.postmedia.net/mctxt.htm

[7] Gianni Romano, "The future is under construction," *Media Connection,* Edizioni Scheiwiller, Milano 2001 book + cd rom (cited online 5 June 2003) http://www.postmedia.net/mctxt.htm

[8] Excerpt from the Electronic Arts Intermix site, where there is also a link to a video clip of the work (cited online 5 April 2003) http://www.eai.org/eai/artist.jsp?artistID=408

[9] As these works are described on the Electronic Arts Intermix site (cited online 5 April 2003) http://www.eai.org/eai/artist.jsp?artistID=408

[10] Martha Gever, "Medium Cool," The Independent 9:8 (October 1986), pg 20, quoted in Marita Sturken "Paradox in the Evolution of an Art Form: Great Expectations and the Making of a History" (essay cited online 5 April 2003)www.bavc.org/preservation/dvd/resources/essays.htm

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] See particularly pgs 38 and 39

[16] Benjamin Buchloh in conversation with Catherine David and Jean-Francois Chevrier, in David, Catherine/Chevrier, Jean-Francois (ed.) *Politics-Poetics, documenta X – the book*, Ostifildern_Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1997, pg 632

[17] cited online June 2003, http://www.eai.org/eai/biography.jsp?artistID=430

[18] cited online June 2003 http://www.eai.org/eai/biography.jsp?artistID=430

[19] Benjamin Buchloh in conversation with Catherine David and Jean-Francois Chevrier, in David, Catherine/Chevrier, Jean-Francois (ed.) *Politics-Poetics, documenta X – the book*, Ostifildern_Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1997, pg 630

[20] Sianne Ngai and Nancy Shaw "Site/Stake/Struggle: Stan Douglas's Win, Place, or Show" in Cooke, Lynne/Kelly, Karin (ed.) *Double Vision: Stan Douglas and Douglas Gordon*, New York: Dia Centre for the Arts, 1999

[21] Catherine David and Jean-Francois Chevrier in dialogue with Benjamin Buchloh, "1960-1997: The Political Potential of Art" *Politics-Poetics, documenta X – the book*, Ostifildern_Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1997, pg 632

[22] Andreas Huyssen, "Pop Art Retrospective", in David, Catherine/Chevrier, Jean-Francois (ed.) *Politics-Poetics, documenta X – the book*, Ostifildern_Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1997, pg 398

[23] Ibid., pg 400

[24] Ibid., pg 398

[25] Fast curated "Fido Television" at New York's Hunter College Art Gallery in 2000, an exhibition that brought together a group of like-minded artists who use the tools of television to 'talk back' to it. A "Fido" is a coin with a minting error, mass-produced yet somehow distinct. (cited online April 03) http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/advancement/publicrelations/news/2000/art2000/art2000.html

[26] *In Media Res: Information, Contre-Information*, 14 May – 21 June 2003, exhibition catalogue, University of Rennes Press

[27] *tele[vision]* show curated by Joshua Decter (cited online April 03) http://www.e-flux.com/welcome/tele/text_1.html

[28] Notorious: Alfred Hitchcock and Contemporary Art (cited online April 03) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1999/08/99/hitchcock100/414007.stm

[29] McKenzie Wark, posted to fibreculture, http://www.fibreculture.org/archives/

[30] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg 239

[31] As played out in contemporary science fiction, the Terminator movies for example.

[32] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg 241

[33] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2000

[34] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2000, pg 21, quoted in Lister, Martin/Dovey, Jon/Giddens, Seth/Grant, Iain/Kelly, Kieran, New Media: A Critical Introduction, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pg 51

[35] Martin Lister, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddens, Iain Grant and Kieran Kelly, *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pg 51

[36] Mark de'Rozario, "White Magic" cited online 7/9/03 http://www.k-gothic.net/whitemagic.html

[37] Mark de'Rozario, "White Magic" cited online 7/9/03 http://www.k-gothic.net/whitemagic.html (quoting Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1991, pg 159)

[38] Emma Crimmings, "Traces: Naomi Bishop and Richard Raber" in Gibson, Ross (ed.), *Remembrance and the Moving Image*, Melbourne: ACMI, 2003, pg 37

[39] Private email from Adimex, suppliers of Continuum software, 3 June 2003

[40] Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2001, pg 203

[41] *::contagion::* catalogue, published by the New Zealand Film Archive, Wellington, October 2000

[42] Conversation with the artist at the time of curating the *::contagion::* exhibition, late 2001

[43] Scott McQuire, "Video Theory " (cited online 13/8/03) http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/visarts/globe/issue9/smtxt.html
The Gary Hill quote here is from 'Interviewed Interview' in World Wide Video, *Art & Design* profile no. 31, 1993, pg 65

[44] Eric Davis, "Anchors Aweigh" Coerver, Chad (ed.), *010101:Art in Technological Times*, San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2001, pg 141

[45] private email correspondence, 15 May 2002

[46] The use of subtitles is an idea that my own work **eurovision** explores. It does this by taking sections of various European 'art' films and recombining them in novel ways, but creating/maintaining 'narrativity' via the specific use of the subtitles/sequences which are akin to 'accidental artifacts' burned onto the VHS tapes at my disposal at the time.

[47] Linda Wallace, "Cross discipline, experiment, market!", RealTime #56, pg 22

[48] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg 241

[49] Ian Ward from the University of Queensland has studied developments in what he has called the Australian PR State. The Howard Government's outlay on television advertising has skyrocketed, spending hundreds of millions of dollars on political advertising for the GST, Federation, Be Alert Not Alarmed anti-terrorism campaign, and campaigns for private health care coverage and the army reserve, not to mention the money spent on defense force advertising. As Ward notes in Australia, as in the UK: "the state plays a crucial role as a dominant source of information and imagery." Under these circumstances, a destabilization of the strategies employed by the state becomes one akin to artist activism. Ian Ward, School of Political Science and International Studies, University of Queensland "An Australian PR State?" paper for the ANZCA03 Conference, July 2003 Brisbane

[50] Ursula Biemann (ed.), *Stuff it: The Video Essay in the Digital Age*, Zurich: The Institute for Theory of Art and Design, 2003.

[51] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg 10

[52] Linda Wallace, "Emerging Artists," *Realtime* issue # 57. see also Emile Zile's site at www.bubotic.net

[53] Emile Zile, private email, August 2, 2004

[54] Chapter one, "televisual terrain," pg 24

[55] (cited online 18 September, 2003) http://www.warholstars.org/filmch/empire.html

[56] *mobile office* exhibition at the Standard Bank Gallery in Johannesburg's CBD

[57] George Wagner, "Discounted Blights and Historical Evasions" in Moser, Mary Anne/Bennett, Catherine (ed.), *Stan Douglas*, Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1999, pg 89

[58] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pg 241

[59] George Wagner, "Discounted Blights and Historical Evasions" in Moser, Mary Anne/Bennett, Catherine (ed.), *Stan Douglas*, Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1999, pg 89

[60] Sianne Ngai and Nancy Shaw "Site/Stake/Struggle: Stan Douglas's Win, Place, or Show" in Cooke, Lynne/Kelly, Karin (ed.) *Double Vision: Stan Douglas and Douglas Gordon*, New York: Dia Centre for the Arts, 1999, pg 25

[61] Ibid., pg 25

[62] Stan Douglas, in conversation with Diana Thater, *Stan Douglas*, London: Phaidon Press, 1998, pg 24, quoted by William Wood, "Secret Work," in Moser, Mary Anne/Bennett, Catherine (ed.), *Stan Douglas*, Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1999, pg 107

[63] Lynne Cooke in Cooke, Lynne/Kelly, Karin (ed.) *Double Vision: Stan Douglas and Douglas Gordon*, New York: Dia Centre for the Arts, 1999, pg 9

[64] Ibid.

[65] Sianne Ngai and Nancy Shaw "Site/Stake/Struggle: Stan Douglas's Win, Place, or Show" in Cooke, Lynne/Kelly, Karin (ed.) *Double Vision: Stan Douglas and Douglas Gordon*, New York: Dia Centre for the Arts, 1999, pg 19

[66] Ibid., pg 19

[67] Ibid., pg 30

[68] Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, New York: Aperture in association with Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990

[69] Geert Lovink, The Typewriter of the Illiterate: an interview with Janos Sugar, *nettime* (cited online 29 May 2003) http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0305/msg00076.html

[70] ibid.

[71] Vilem Flusser, "Fred Forest or the destruction of the established points of view" December 1975 (cited July 7 2003) http://www.webnetmuseum.org/html/en/expo-retr-fredforest/auteurs/flusser_en.htm#text

[72] Alison Caroll interviews Pat Hoffie, "An Interview, May-June 2003", Witnessing to Silence: Art and Human Rights (exhibition catalogue) edited by Caroline Turner and Nancy Sever, ANU, pg 30

[73] Ibid., pg 30

[74] Ibid., pg 31

[75] Eighteenth century artists and patrons used the terms "Grand Manner" or Great Style" to describe paintings that used visual metaphors (cited online 5 October 2003) http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg59/gg59-main1.html
"Grand Manner" or Great Style" was a term given to the imposing style of history painting advocated by the teaching academies throughout Europe from the late 17th century onwards, based on the art of Raphael, Poussin and the Carracci. The idea of an elevated style of writing, deriving from Classical rhetoric, was applied to visual art by late Renaissance theorists, especially Giovanni Pietro Bellori, who in 1664 urged 'noble' artists to form in their minds 'an example of superior beauty and, reflecting on it, improve upon nature until it is without fault'. He made it clear that this was an élite style, appreciated only by 'higher spirits' and not understood by the populace, who 'praise things painted naturalistically' and 'approve of novelty'. (cited online 5 October 2003) http://www.artnet.com/library/03/0340/T034044.ASP

[76] Mark Cousins quoted by Francis McKee in "A Touch of Evil:
I saw Satan Fall Like Lightning (Luke, 10:18)" cited online 6/4/03, www.variant.randomstate.org/2texts/Francis_McKee.html

[77] Joshua Decter and Robert Riley in conversation "Talking Television' (cited online 9 June 2003) http://www.postmedia.net/02/decterriley.htm

[78] http://www.eyebeam-television.ucsd.edu/artform.html

[79] Tim Griffin, "Three Views on the Venice Biennale," Artforum (cited online 3 September 2003)
http://www.Artforum.com/inprint/id=5330&pagenum=7

[80] Ernie Kovacs (1919-1962) is considered to be one of the most important innovators of American television comedy during the 1950s. He said "television…a medium, so called because it is neither rare nor well done." (cited online July 2003) http://www.postmedia.net/ex/televisions.htm

[81] Ron Simon, "RE: TV as a curatorial medium," posted on 5 November 2000 (cited online July 2003) http://www.eyebeam-television.ucsd.edu/massmedia.html

Simon also said: "Think of the other missing pieces of our cultural TV past. For a medium that has been proclaimed a global language, little of international television exists for scrutiny. Only a handful of Dennis Potter's television works are on video. One could make the argument that Potter is an auteur on a scale comparable to a Bergman. How could an regular TV viewer without access to my Museum's archives or the BBC even ponder the question. How many other voices are missing? Think of the regional, local, independent creators still absent from the one channel universe."

[82] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2000, pg 55