

The Aesthetics of Narcissism. Indeed, there is a long history of the maker's own self being featured in video. Video's attraction to self-portraiture and the foregrounding of the author as actor has, if anything, accelerated with the Internet's distribution of digital video (pause to break down the now common lexicon proper noun 'YouTube'); in this, and certainly as exemplified by the works in *Video Visions*, we see not only a potential for narcissism, but the potential to reclaim how one's self is portrayed and manipulated by mainstream media.

Returning to Steyerl's text, it seems pertinent to note her reference to the concept of a Third Cinema as outlined by the manifesto *For an Imperfect Cinema* by Juan García Espinosa. Steyerl notes that 'In his manifesto, Espinosa also reflects on the promises of new media. He clearly predicts that the development of video technology will jeopardize the elitist position of traditional filmmakers and enable some sort of mass film production: an art of the people.'¹⁰

Here with *Video Visions*, viewed perhaps ironically at a state cinema, we can question and think about video's potential as an 'art of the people.' It is significant in this respect to ensure its distribution is encouraged, never stifled.

1 Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux journal series, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2012, p. 36.

2 Ciar Byrne, *20 notorious video nasties*, The Independent, 2005: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/20-notorious-video-nasties-508525.html>

3 Byron Acohido, *Government takedown of Megaupload leads to new fears*, USA Today, 2012: <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/news/story/2012-01-20/megaupload-arrests-fbi/52697186/1>

4 Steve Dorsey, *Turkey's Social Media And Smartphones Key To 'Occupy Gezi' Protests*, Huffington Post, 2013: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/09/turkey-social-media-smartphones-occupy-gezi-protests_n_3411542.html

5 Wikileaks, *Collateral Murder*, 5 April 2010: http://wikileaks.org/wiki/Collateral_Murder_5_Apr_2010

6 The Associated Press, *Pirate Party gains three seats in Iceland's parliament*, CBS News, 2013: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57582088/pirate-party-gains-three-seats-in-icelands-parliament/

7 Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill, *NSA Prism program taps into user data of Apple, Google and others*, The Guardian, 2013: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/06/us-tech-giants-nsa-data>

8 Jenna Clarke, *Not so dumb: Ad catches on in big way at Cannes*, Canberra Times, 2013: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/business/media-and-marketing/not-so-dumb-ad-catches-on-in-big-way-at-cannes-20130623-2or15.html>

9 Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, semiotext(e) intervention series, semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2010 p. 52.

10 Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, e-flux journal series, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2012, p. 39.

MEMORY SCREENS

Laura Castagnini

We live in an age where the majority of performance art that we encounter is mediated via a screen. Major art institutions are increasingly acquiring and presenting video documentation of iconic performance works from the 1960s and 1970s, making them accessible to audiences who couldn't 'be there' to experience the original live event: those of us who were too young, too far away, or simply weren't invited to the performance. At the same time, technological advances have reduced the cost of documentation equipment, while websites such as YouTube and Vimeo encourage and freely circulate videos generated by users who perform for the camera.

Reflecting on the generational rift that has erupted in performance art discourse, the eminent art historian Amelia Jones has argued that viewing performance documentation should hold the same value as 'being there' for the original live experience. In her article '*Presence*' in *Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation* (1997), Jones posits, and deliberately limits her analysis of, a selection of performance artworks 'as documentary traces, and this goes even for those events I also experienced 'in the flesh'; I view these, through the memory screen, and they become documentary in their own right.'¹ Jones claims the documents have inherent value in the production of knowledge and therefore in the artwork's making of meaning.

Taking cue from Amelia Jones, *Memory Screens* hones in on the particularity of our contemporary condition within the current resurgence of interest in performance art. It is within a cultural landscape of screens and performing bodies that we have commissioned three contemporary artists to reimagine, recreate or re-perform a seminal live or on-screen performance piece from the nexus of video and performance art history; the late 1960s to mid-1970s. We want to investigate how contemporary practices might be shaped by the 'memory screen' of performance art history, to examine the repercussions of viewing performance as documentation on individual practices as well as the collective art psyche, thus forging non-linear narratives of viewing, performing and reading video.

The three artists participating in *Memory Screens*, Hannah Raisin, Salote Tawale and Emile Zile, are practitioners of bold, provocative work that stands at the forefront of live art and screen culture. Charting wildly divergent territories, their individual performances utilise a broad range of approaches to screen-based technology, histories, and subject matter.

Hannah Raisin's intuitive engagement with transgressive and gender-orientated performance instantiates the continuing relevance of feminist subject matter for women today. She performs actions, both live and on-screen, that range from outrageous subversions of societal norms to imaginative propositions for a fluid and borderless future. For *Memory Screens*, Raisin has selected Carolee Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* (1975) as her point of reference and, in tribute to this iconic feminist performance, pulls an iPod cord from her vagina to broadcast Cyndi Lauper's 80s hit single *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*.



Hannah Raisin (MEL),
Dear Carolee, love Cindy Love Hannah,
2013, digital photograph

Salote Tawale's practice traverses sculpture, photography and performance on video to reflect upon interpersonal relationships, personal narratives and stories of failed communication. As a woman of Pacific Islander heritage, this terrain is imbued with postcolonial implications. Accordingly, race is injected into (the continuation of) a white-dominated feminist climate in Tawale's appropriation of Susan Mogul's video *Dressing Up* (1973). Beginning with the same text as Mogul, Tawale inserts her own personal histories while slowly cladding herself in a costume resembling a totem or statue. Tawale simulates Mogul's creation of her video by addressing the camera and ignoring the audience,

further complicating assumptions we hold in relation to histories, the subject-viewer dynamic, and the notion of performance.



Salote Tawale (AUS), *Wiibox*, 2013

Emile Zile interrogates and infiltrates the cinematic, televisual, and web-based conventions that mediate experience through the screen. Taking audio-visual media as both his subject and medium, Zile filters images and sound through his deadpan sense of humour and lo-fi composition techniques to extrapolate meaning from our contemporary viewing material. For *Memory Screens*, Zile responds to the social and political consequences of Ant Farm's irreverent and self-conscious stunt *Media Burn* (1975)—in which a Cadillac is driven through a wall of burning television sets—by appropriating tropes of new technology whose social and political impact has eclipsed futuristic expectations of television. Zile's live roll call of unborn Internet individuals, created through random name generating software, negotiates the immaterial nature of network communication and the corporeal effect of grief.



Emile Zile (AUS/NL), *Untitled*, 2013

Viewed together, these new works by Hannah Raisin, Salote Tawale, and Emile Zile enact multiple and overlapping performance strategies that engage with, through, and via their individual 'memory screens.' Reflecting on influential artworks of the past, but also proposing alternate narratives of performance histories, the artists in *Memory Screens* move video beyond its documentary function towards new ways of engaging with live and on-screen performance.

¹ Amelia Jones, "Presence" in *Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation*, Art Journal, Vol. 56, No. 4, Performance Art: (Some) Theory and (Selected) Practice at the End of This Century (Winter, 1997), p. 12.

Hannah Raisin's performance has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



PLEASE FW: CALL TO JOIN WORLD-WIDE REBELLION AGAINST THE SCREEN

Skip Blumberg
August 22, 2013

Is your life excessively occupied by your various screens?

The time has come for us all to rebel against the screen NOW!

Time is running out to revolt. While our species is still biological, while we still have our individual minds, and before artificial intelligence gains singularity, we have this opportunity for this pre-emptive campaign to control our rights and stay in control of the intelligent machines. OK, sure, that scary cybernetic future may be beyond our and our kids' lifetimes. And maybe you don't feel a responsibility for the preservation of our species. But you must already know that change is at its fastest pace and must feel the conscious and unconscious de-provements to your own daily life.

Whether you're mad as hell and can't take it anymore, or if you just preferred life before the digital rat race, this is a call to join international 21st Century citizens in a rebellion against our screens.

Even if you feel like smashing your screen, this is not a call for destruction, not even to unplug, to entirely give up screens.

This is a call to all humans for a conscious effort to limit the impact of the machine on us as individuals, families, homes, schools, and workplaces. Let's consciously and permanently tilt the balance of power towards humans over hard drives.