

Skin out of Screen:
A New Definition of Dimensionality
in Marck's Video Sculptures

by

ECEM SENYUVA

A dissertation submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the Master's Degree in Contemporary Art

Sotheby's Institute of Art-London

©

2018

ABSTRACT

Coming into my MA from a film background, my interest lied in video art. Choosing to write on the complex multimedia artworks of Tony Oursler and the development of “new media,” I discovered the medium of “video sculpture.” Armed with my research for a video sculpture exhibition I proposed on Nam June Paik, Tony Oursler, Cildo Meireles and Jordan Wolfson, I aspired to come to an understanding of what material and philosophical ideas might be definitive in these video sculptors’ distinct, if also comparable practices.

Feeling an irresistible pull towards this genre, I encountered the video sculptures of the Swiss artist Marck at Contemporary Istanbul. My initial reaction of shock towards Marck’s unique illusions turned into a pursuit of exploring every aspect of this extraordinary artist’s oeuvre. I returned the my readings of Bataille’s philosophy and began to see Marck as a devotee of the great French philosopher, not just in terms of his love for the endangered, sexualized female form, but in his “inanimatization” of the human body and his sacreligious imprisonment of human shapes into strange, four-dimensional video sculptures. I got in touch with Marck, who encouraged me in my research and was thrilled to hear that this dissertation would be the first piece of critical literature about his body of work.

In order to create a rigorous analysis of Marck’s work, I followed a three-part strategy analyzing the formal qualities of Marck’s work, situating him alongside other video-sculptors and finally, explaining the connection I explored between Bataille’s philosophy and the artist’s work. In the course of my studies, I have moved from the mute incomprehension of my first engagement with Marck in September 2017 to a real affection for and understanding of his work. I hope to share that understanding in the work that follows.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my brilliant tutor, **Dr. Pierre Saurisse**, for his wisdom, invaluable feedback, and guidance throughout the process of writing this dissertation. Without his expertise and assistance this paper would not have been possible.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the exceptional faculty at the MACA program, **Dr. Marcus Verhagen** for his unprecedented mentorship and compassion, **Dr. Lauren Rotenberg** for her extraordinary knowledge and invaluable feedback, and **Juliet Hacking** for her passion of teaching and scholarly humor. They each opened the doors of Contemporary Art theories and practices for me in the most challenging, nurturing and fulfilling ways.

I would also like to thank **Page Knox**, my Art Humanities professor at Columbia University for sparking an otherwise undiscovered passion in me.

I am deeply indebted to my parents **Dr. Cemal Senyuva** and **Dr. Sevil Oz** for being incredible role models and making this unparalleled education possible, to my sister **Dr. Nazli Senyuva** for her unending enthusiasm and pride, and my husband-to-be **Max Lawton** for his musical motivation and belief in me.

Lastly, I am very grateful for the artist **Marck** for teaching me new ways of seeing the world through video that I didn't think were possible. I am thankful for his interest in my dissertation which has motivated me from day one, and the time he took answering my questions.

COPYRIGHT DECLARATION

I herewith declare that no portion of the work referred to in this dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

NOTES

Copyright in the text of this dissertation rests with the author. Copies (by any process) both in full, and of extracts, may be made only in accordance with instructions given by the author and lodged in the Sotheby's Institute Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian.

The ownership of any intellectual property rights which may be described in this dissertation is vested in Sotheby's Institute, subject to prior agreement to the contrary, and may not be available for use by third parties without the written permission of the institute, which will prescribe the terms and conditions of any such agreement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
COPYRIGHT DECLARATION	4
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	6
INTRODUCTION: Breaking the Fourth Wall of the Moving Image	8
CHAPTER 1: Video Sculptor as Illusionist: Breaking Out of the Screen	12
Marck as Illusionist.....	13
Framing Device as Gateway.....	16
Fogged Glasses as Gateway.....	19
Kinetic Elements as Gateway.....	21
Direct Causal Connection as Gateway.....	23
CHAPTER 2: Situating Marck Amongst Video Sculptors	26
Illusion and Early Video Sculpture.....	27
Marck’s Transformative Approach.....	36
CHAPTER 3: A Reading of Marck’s Video Sculptures Through Bataille’s	
<i>Erotism</i>	39
The Ontological Value of Marck’s Physicality.....	39
CONCLUSION: Skin out of Screen	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47
ILLUSTRATIONS	50
APPENDIX	75

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1.** Marck, *Neue Freiheit silver*, 2011, LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent), 34 x 20 x 9.5 in, 21:20 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 2.** Marck, *Türkisches Bath*, 2008, LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent), 34 x 20 x 8 in, 09:44 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 3.** Marck, *Gegenstrom XXXL*, 2015, LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent), 165 x 85 x 40 cm, 23:43 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 4.** Marck, *Frauenkiste*, 2007, LCD panel, iron, glass, video (color, silent), 37 x 24 x 47in, 09:57 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 5.** Marck, *Tank mini*, 2015, LCD panel, iron, wood, glass, video (color, silent), 150 x 300 x 40 cm, 21:41 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 6.** Marck, *Untitled*, 2011, LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent), 34 x 20 x 9.5 in, 21:31 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 7.** Marck, *Art student*, 2014, LCD panel, iron, humidifier, video (color, silent), 34 x 20 x 9.5 in, 01:16 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 8.** Marck, *On / off*, 2015, LCD panel, iron, bulbs, video (color, silent), 45 x 95 x 16, 02:14 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 9.** Marck, *Fresh*, 2016, LCD panel, iron, propeller, video (color, silent), 34 x 20 x 9.5, 13:37 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 10.** Nam June Paik, *Beatles Electronique*, 1966-69, video, 2:59 min. Photo Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Figure 11.** Nam June Paik, *Robot K-456*, 1964, steel, aluminum, fabric, electronic components, rubber, wires, foam rubber, 185 cm. Photo Courtesy Artsy
- Figure 12.** Nam June Paik, *Bakelite Robot*, 2002, monitor, radio, 1200 x 920 x 205 mm, 05:05 min. Photo Courtesy of Tate Modern, London
- Figure 13.** Vito Acconci, *Undertone*, 1972, video (black and white, sound), 37:20 min. Photo Courtesy of Artnet
- Figure 14.** Paul McCarthy, *Spitting on the Camera Lens*, 1974, video (black and white, sound), 01:00 min. Photo Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Figure 15.** Bill Viola, *The Space Between Teeth*, 1976, video (color, sound), 09:12 min. Photo Courtesy Electronic Arts InterMix
- Figure 16.** Shigeko Kubota, *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1976, color-synthesized video (color, silent), monitors, plywood, 168.3 x 78.6 x 170.2 cm. Photo Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Figure 17.** Tony Oursler, *The Most Beautiful Thing I've Never Seen*, 1995, sofa, doll, video (color, sound), projection, 2100 x 2200 mm, 06:23 min. Photo Courtesy of Tate Modern, London
- Figure 18.** Tony Oursler, *b0t / flow - ch@rt*, 2017, computer circuitry, glass, screens, 63 x 12 x 19 in. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 19.** Pipilotti Rist, *Selfless in a Bath of Lava*, 1994, video (color, sound), installation, 1:09 min. Photo Courtesy Artnet
- Figure 20.** Pipilotti Rist, *4th Floor to Mildness*, 2016, video and sound installation, beds, pillows, covers, projectors, moving mirrors, media players, audio system, net, curtain, carpet, wall paint, neon, 8:11 min. Photo Courtesy NECSUS
- Figure 21.** Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Glass on Body)*, 1972, color print, 49 x 32.5 cm. Photo Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art, New York
- Figure 22.** Pipilotti Rist, *Open My Glade (Flatten)*, 2000, single channel electronic billboard video installation (color, silent), 3:00 min. Courtesy Times Square Arts
- Figure 23.** Marck, *Fliege*, 2011, LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent), 34 x 20 x 7, 56:51 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 24.** Marck, *Maria II*, 2010, LCD panel, wood, glass, video (color, silent), 35 x 21 x 7 in., 36:49 min. Photo Courtesy the artist
- Figure 25.** Marck, *Adam & Eva*, 2013, LCD screen, iron, ball, video (color, silent), 90 x 95 cm, 21:39 min. Photo Courtesy the artist

INTRODUCTION

To Break the Fourth Wall of the Moving Image

“Breaking the fourth wall” refers to the late 19th century theatrical instrument where the on-stage actors acknowledged the existence of the audience, breaking the invisible wall between the fictional world of the spectacle and the reality of the audience. Seen as a trait of modernist theater, this technique was later developed in the early 20th century as a refusal of the “suspension of disbelief,” referring to the willingness of the audience to suspend their critical abilities in order to believe surreal notions, and “actively pretend they do not cohabit the same space” as the actors.¹ Disapproving the audience’s sacrifice of logic for the sake of pleasure and their belief of the fictional world of the actors, the realist and naturalist theater advocated for the breaking of the fourth wall which heavily influenced film and television of the 1950s, and this play between an active and passive spectator became a central concern of the 20th century visual and performative arts.

In his 2004 *Film History* article “Breaking the Fourth Wall: ‘Belascoism’, Modernism, and a 3-D ‘Kiss Me Kate,’” William Paul investigates the methods in which film institutionalizes the emergence effect (of objects seemingly coming out of the screen) with 3-D in order to explore theatrical possibilities and overcome the screen’s lack of depth. Underlining the constraint of film in breaking the fourth wall due to the flat nature of its curtain as opposed to the 3-D stage of the theater, Paul indicates that the screen was often mentioned as “the curtain” during the early 20th century, and that “even with the widest screens, the screen does function like a curtain, demarcating a space behind which the image always remains.”² Arguing that the technological base of film facilitates the audience’s faith in the fictional world and makes it more difficult to achieve realism compared to

¹ William Paul, “Breaking the Fourth Wall: ‘Belascoism’, Modernism, and a 3-D ‘Kiss Me Kate,” *Film History* 16, no. 3 (2004): 235.

² Paul, “Breaking the Fourth Wall,” 234.

theater, Paul declares that “in the theatre, fourth wall staging requires a suspension of disbelief because the space of the stage is contiguous with that of the audience, however much the proscenium arch serves as a demarcation between the two spaces,” whereas “with the screen image, belief is more easily given because the image represents a truly unbridgeable space, a space that seems to belong to the real world, yet one that we can never access.”³ Given this perception of an “unbridgeable,” disconnected space innate in the video image, the notion of “audience participation” ascribed to film seems unusual. How could the film audience reach a similar state of shock as the theater audience with the break of the fourth-wall illusion despite its flat screen barrier?

The answer came with the 3-D technologies in the 1950s that allowed exploration of the metaphysical space of the flat film screen and resulted in an active audience engagement with the film image. As Paul describes, due to the 3-D emergence effect, the audience would “frequently flinch or duck in response to objects thrown from the screen, or, conversely, they [would] reach up and try to grasp the chimera of ghost-like objects,” breaking their eternal silence.⁴ Evolving ever since, 3-D technologies have been more and more effective in enhancing the depth perception illusion in IMAX theaters and Disney theme parks throughout the 2000s.

Despite film’s ability to finally entangle its audience in its fiction world through 3-D technologies that make up for the lack of depth in its material representation, the problem regarding “suspension of belief” seems to be ever-present. While breaking the fourth wall in theater has the intention of breaking the illusion of the fictional nature of the spectacle, waking the passive audience up and rendering them active participants in the play, breaking the fourth wall in film through emergence effect seems to create a new, intangible world between the reality of spectator and the world of fiction instead of acting as a gateway between the two. As a result, the spectator still falls in the trap of “suspension of belief,”

³ Paul, “Breaking the Fourth Wall,” 232.

⁴ Paul, “Breaking the Fourth Wall,” 230.

ending up taking pleasure from and getting lost in this exciting visual stimulus, remaining detached from the real world despite their active movements.

With the very act of wearing the 3-D glasses and buying an IMAX ticket, the audience consciously agrees to lose touch with reality in this new, fabricated dimension; yet isn't there a way to activate their participation without obvious means, for a purer, realer engagement with the video image, for a purer emotional response to the fiction world, and even for a transformation by the very act of engaging with the video image? How can film make the audience engage with its fictional world while preserving their reality? How can video break the fourth wall while keeping its audience grounded? How can it mimic the effects of theater and achieve a 'psychological' shock rather than a purely 'physical' one in the audience?

The 54-year-old Swiss video sculptor Marck seems to have overcome the fundamental issue resulting from the questionable breaking of the fourth wall through a 3-D moving image, and to have developed an authentic way of achieving this theatrical device in film, perhaps for the first time in the history of the moving image. By reversing the treatments of the 3-D film image and its flat screen, Marck preserves the flatness of the video image, and instead turns its traditionally flat representation, its "curtain," into a three-dimensional box that acts as a gateway between the world of the spectator and the world of the fictional video subject. Instead of creating the illusion of conquering the one-dimensionality of the film image and pushing the image straight into the space of the audience through conventional 3-D technologies, Marck decides to abandon these existing representations in order to create a rawer, more composed and mentally, not physically shocking experience for the contemporary audience. Without any expectations, or consciously pre-conditioning the emergence effect (such as buying an IMAX movie ticket), Marck's unprepared audience experiences a kind of four-dimensionality they can never purchase a ticket for.

As opposed to 3-D feature films' choice of numerous cast members, extravagant special effects, 3-D glasses, multidimensional fictional worlds, intense soundtracks and complex narratives, Marck chooses to feature maximum five subjects, inhabiting muted blank spaces, trapped in minimal 3-D sculptural boxes

with mostly no clothes on. Whereas 3-D films seem to have the only goal of getting a superficial, physical reaction out of the audience, Marck prefers to move his audience deeply, causing an initial reaction of shock through illusion. Not concerning to only please, but also challenge his audience mentally, Marck breaks the fourth wall in video in the theatrical sense, in a way film has not been able to before.

The fourth wall breaks when the tradition of the subject ignoring the audience and being absorbed in their fiction world is breached, which is achieved through directly confronting the audience by making eye contact, talking to them or referring to their world in a dialogue. Not only does Marck utilize subjects that lock eyes with the audience, but also creates the illusion of being part of their world, without the creation of a new intangible dimension. Whether through gluing sculptural objects on the screen that give his subjects a three-dimensionality, or through placing kinetic objects that determine a cause and effect relationship between the real and virtual spaces, this dissertation aims to analyze Marck's beyond conventional methods in breaking the fourth wall. These innovative and formal techniques result in an illusion that generates cathartic moments in the audience.

Working as a handymn before becoming a full-time artist, Marck mastered the ways in which to deconstruct and reconstruct complex technical devices, which paved the way for his unconventionally authentic video sculpting practices. Joining the Licht Feld gallery in 2005, and quickly becoming known to a wider audience, Marck's works have been enchanting audiences at Scope Art Fair New York and Miami, Art Basel Miami, Contemporary Istanbul and numerous exhibitions around the world. With his works present in private galleries and contemporary art museums in Canada, France, the USA, Turkey, Switzerland, Rumania, Lebanon, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Korea and more, Marck's concrete breaking of the fourth wall through different techniques of breaking the boundary between the spectator and the video subject seems to be utterly.⁵

⁵ Hadorn, Marck: Works, 9.

CHAPTER 1

Video Sculptor as Illusionist: Breaking Out of the Screen

“Since I was always fascinated by the medium of film and thus the possibility of non-static narrative and the shaping of objects and sculptures, even design, it was logical for me to bring these two areas together. With the video I am able to remove the statics from the sculpture. Conversely, I can set real limits to the video with the sculpture.”

–Marck⁶

In Chapter One, we will attempt to conceive of the contemporary Swiss artist Marck as an illusionist– a video sculptor who triggers an immediate reaction of shock as his digital subjects emerge from the flat, virtual screen into the physical realm of the audience’s reality in a deceivingly concrete form. In this investigation of how Marck manages to blur the lines between the real and the virtual, and give his one-dimensional subjects three-dimensionality, the first chapter will define him as a “video sculptor,” and attempt an in-depth material analysis of his groundbreaking video sculptures that authentically break the fourth wall rather than creating a new three-dimensionality done by 3-D films.

Examining Marck’s engagement with physical representation through illusion, Chapter One will examine ten artworks under four distinct categories of manipulations. I will demonstrate how the frame is altered by Marck in order to transform his video sculptures into gateways between the real and the virtual. These gateways are not to be confused with an extension of the frame: framing devices, fogged glasses, kinetic objects, and a direct causal connection between what happens within and outside of the painting are much more ontological devices than mere manipulations of frame. Moreover, this chapter will tackle the recurrent motif of entrapment in Marck’s artworks, and how the application of each manipulation results in a visceral reaction of shock in the audience, rendering them empathetic, and speaking to their emotions.

⁶ Hadorn, Marck: Works, 13.

What is striking about Marck's illusion is his rejection of using 3-D technologies and nevertheless achieving a negative parallax, the notion of objects in a film seeming to exist between the audience and the screen. In most cases, he exploits the material surrounding of his videos by embellishing it with various framing objects, geometrical shapes and kinetic devices. Without the assistance of anaglyphs, the red and cyan glasses that superimpose two images together to give the overall image depth, and without stereoscopy or post-production special effects, Marck chooses to manipulate not the video image but the frame and screen that display it in order to create his illusions.

This chapter, as a result, will seek to pinpoint new kinds of provocative visceral experiences Marck's audience is exposed to with revolutionary yet simple techniques of reimagining the frame and screen in his video sculptures. Only by employing a medium-specific approach, and only through a sound, step-by-step comprehension of how the illusion is constructed can we fathom the effect of that illusion, which is the ability of the artist to shock, captivate, puzzle and even transform his audience. Concretely breaking the fourth wall with his revolutionary techniques and creating the illusion that the fictional subject is in the real time and space of the audience, just like the case in theater, while constantly reminding the audience that there is indeed a screen in front of them, Marck's rebellion against the traditional ways of displaying video art is worth observing, analyzing and appreciating. One can argue that he is the first moving image artist who is able to shock the audience the way theater actors do when they break the wall that separates them from the audience.

Marck as Illusionist

Marck's method of breaking the fourth wall goes beyond mere eye contact of digital subjects with the audience. The artist's illusion of the screen as a portal between the worlds of fiction and reality is carefully constructed around the motif of entrapment, and takes the shape of a literal box inhabited by "prisoner" subjects. In an interview I conducted with Marck (see Appendix), the artist justified his

passion for giving three-dimensionality to his videos, stating that “pure video art is too shallow and too limited” and that “with three-dimensionality I can give the subjects their real limit, or respectively their depth. I try to transfer the movie into the real. Of course, it is not like in theater, but it helps me to convey situations in a more visceral way and get more emotional responses from the viewer.”

Deliberately constructing his video sculptures to make his subjects look like they share the audience’s time and space through various devices, Marck effectively breaks the fourth wall by shocking the audience with the illusion of his enchanted boxes. As Fredy Hadorn suggests in *Marck: Works 2005-2011*, Marck’s moving image “is not only a messenger (of a visual message), but due to the sculptural frame also receives a spatial dimension which in turn he seeks to break through.”⁷

“I would ultimately like to lead the audience to reflect and empathize with the subjects in front of them,” declares the artist (see Appendix). “I want them to reflect on themselves... on dealing with fellow human beings...When emotions are triggered in the audience, I have reached my goal.” Passionate about observing people’s behavior in situations of entrapment, Marck traps his female subjects in claustrophobic physical prisons he constructs, and films them as they attempt to break free, which appears as a dominant theme in his artworks. Working with advanced cameras such as Red and 4K, Marck films his predominantly nude female subjects swimming in baths of water, moving inside claustrophobic boxes, engaging in ordinary and at times unusual activities.

The artist’s technical process is a meticulous one. To begin with, he constructs metal geometrical boxes, as well as wooden and metal frames. He then places his female subjects either in these empty, cramped containers they can barely fit into, or in narrow pools of water where they constrainedly float. He surrounds the containers with powerful LED lights to achieve a high resolution, highly bright and sharp image quality. In the case of empty containers, Marck replaces one of the container’s walls with fogged glass, and places his camera

⁷ Hadorn, *Marck: Works*, 10.

exactly where the screen will be in post-production. He then films the female subject who curiously explores this space, at times interacting with the camera by looking directly at it, reaching out to it and even pressing her limbs against it, as if attempting to break free. In the case of the water pool, Marck places his camera on top of this rectangle set and films his female subject from a bird's eye view. Inside the boundaries of the miniature pool, in the center, the artist installs small vertical metal polls forming a geometrical frame big enough to surround the subject. Further limiting her already constrained movements, Marck regulates the boundaries for swimming subject to interact with. He then films her as she examines this water 'prison' and interacts with it, pushing against her metal boundaries, looking at the camera in a pleading manner and reaching out to it, as if asking for our help.

The post-production is where Marck constructs his illusion of the video screen appearing as a window, and concretely achieves breaking the fourth wall. He takes apart an LCD television the same size as the fogged glass of the container, strips the LCD panel from its black frame, and replaces the fogged glass with this panel. He then takes the film he shot inside this box, crops it to fit the measurements of the LCD monitor (thus the measurements of the fogged glass) exactly and plays it on the thin LCD panel. Once the screen accurately fits the video sculpture's frame, Marck detects where he placed the metal polls in the pool, and builds framing devices of different materials (such as wood or metal) on top of those exact spots to make the video extend into the realm of the audience. Through the technique of placing objects inside the real pool for the female subject to interact with, and placing objects outside of the screen in the same locations on top of the video screen for the audience to interact with, Marck invents a unique gateway that connects the worlds of the fiction subject and the real audience. Giving the video sculptures a further three dimensionality, Marck makes both the audience and the female subject aware of the same physical items simultaneously; a new portal is created, the "proscenium arch" of film has been removed, the audience is altogether puzzled.

With this method of replicating the real scenario of a female wandering behind the fogged glass on the digital, one dimensional surface of an LCD panel, the artist is able to transform reality into fiction and clone a real action by turning it into a video inside a box. Looking exactly like its copy, the video renders the temporal motion permanent. Marck invents a concrete gateway between the world of fiction and reality to the degree that the audience could not separate the video sculpture version from the actual female trapped in a box. The audience gets the same sense of three dimensionality one would get from watching a neighbor behind a window, only this time it is the video of the neighbor looking exactly the same way. By showcasing his nude and semi-dressed female video subjects inside these sculptural objects, Marck extends the screen of the video beyond its flatness, into the three-dimensional realm of the audience. Considered an illusionist who blurs the boundaries between space, dimensions and matter, Marck creates video sculptures that link the real to the virtual, and vice versa.

Framing Device as Gateway

Analyzing the video sculptures with their setting as a pool is crucial in understanding the illusion in Marck's artworks. The artist's main tool in creating his illusions is entrapping his subjects in a narrow box, and replicating the precise shape of that box in constructing his video sculptures. This way, he is able to preserve the original setting of the actions and transfer them into the realm of the audience. The motif of the pool is a curious one, since the rectangle shape of the pool echoes the rectangle shape of the screen, making the illusion more believable and striking through this formal parallel.

Neue Freiheit silver (2011) (Fig. 1), *Türkisches Bath* (2008) (Fig.2) and *Gegenstrom XXXL* (2015) (Fig. 3) each made of an LCD panel with a Polyurethane base, iron and glass, showcase distinct women from bird's eye view, all wearing a blue bikini, swimming back and forth in a pool twice their size. The center of the much smaller than life-size rectangle frame is topped with an even smaller framing object, with a round iron, a metal rectangle and a wooden square respectively. "The

bigger the size, the bigger the effect of the protagonists,” declares Marck (see Appendix). “By contrast, small objects can transport viewers into a small world.”

While the metal framing device in Figure 2 is intact and traps its subject in it, the ones in Figures 1 and 3 have a gap big enough for their female subject to fit in, creating a maze-like space for her to pass through and swim around. These female subjects utilize their constrained freedom to examine their narrow spaces, hopelessly pushing the boundaries of the video sculptures with their actions. In her 2010 Artfix Daily article “Video is playing well in midtown Miami,” Molly Hughes Wilmer taps on the illusion aspect created through these framing objects and claims that as the virtual subject “contorts to fit between the posts, you can see her digital body flexing, hair moving, shirt wrinkling when she rubs past the physical posts.” Appearing as three-dimensional objects retreating “from their protrusion back into the screen, as deep as the body they are shaping into bended willows,” the optical illusion created by these women “mesmerizes-for a bit.”⁸ Their calm curiosity and fluid movements makes the audience lose track of time or chronology of the videos; without any words or scream for help, these women captivate the audience in their serene attempts to escape.

Marck is an illusionist who experiments with space, dimensions and matter. With what looks like a magical touch, he opens up invisible tunnels that allow different dimensions to communicate between real and virtual. The video sculpture as a whole looks like a window to another dimension, another reality, with the water being the gateway from one to the other. Marck brings these women into our world through the architectural objects he builds on top of the works. Endlessly swimming in these little pools, going in and out of the metal frames and holding onto their walls, these women continuously attempt to push themselves out of the pool, into the audience’s peripheral space, and every time they bend their bodies and their body parts come out of the water, we feel like they are within our reach– they now belong to our dimension, our reality. The effect is as genuine as a theater actor leaning over the fourth wall and breaking it by

⁸ Wilmer, “Video.”

engaging with the audience. Achieving this illusion without the aid of 3-D glasses, Marck attempts to authentically break the fourth wall in its original sense that hasn't been achieved by film up until this point.

It is worthwhile to mention aspects that are not illusionistic in the pool works. The artist chooses an unusual way to look at swimming people in a pool, and films his subjects from a bird's eye point of view. This peculiar approach may not deceive the audience at first in believing that these subjects are a part of our world, however, as the audience observe the movements of their body parts in the water, and how they interact with the three-dimensional shapes that belong in the real world, they are mesmerized. What is puzzling about Figures 1, 2 and 3 is, whenever one of these swimming subjects' body parts— head, hands, feet or knees come out of the water, it looks as if the audience could touch them. Even when the audience gets close enough to acknowledge the presence of a screen, the female subjects hold the realness of their physicality in the audience's peripheral view. Initially filming horizontally, and replicating the same scenario, only this time placing these pools up vertically on the walls, Marck achieves a physically impossible reproduction of real life, it is fascinating for the audience to see the water not flowing out of the frame. Although they seem real, the pools of water defy gravity in the audience's physical reality. Only responding to the female subjects' movements who inhabit it, the rebellion of these waters puzzles the audience with their denial of our reality yet will to exist in it. These women who live in a place where there is potentially no gravity, are reaching out to the audience from another dimension through their bodies, and they're desperately trying to escape into our own world.

A crucial element that adds to this effect is the direct confrontation of the subjects' gaze with the audience. Every time they get inside the metal framing device, they look up to the audience, and hold their strong, demanding gaze for help. Despite the constant reminder that there is a screen in front of them, Marck tricks the audience with his visually powerful gaze; the audience cannot help but have the feeling that there is a real woman, within their reach, needing their help. This utter visual shock of not knowing what they are dealing with blurs the

boundaries between their perception of reality versus representation. The idea that whether or not the subject matter is real and alive or fictional and prerecorded, the resulting visual is identical creates a striking response from the materiality of the artwork and breaks the fourth wall in a way that has not been broken before in video.

Fogged Glasses as Gateway

In a different case of the illusion of a prison associated with the motif of entrapment, Marck this time traps his female figures in claustrophobic, iron boxes shut with rusty nails, with fogged glasses on one side so the audience can see them. Whereas the artist hangs the life-size video sculpture *Tank mini* (2015) (Fig. 5) up, he takes *Frauenkiste* (2007) (Fig. 4) off the wall and places it on the floor of the exhibition space, further challenging the audience's perception of reality. Inside these iron boxes, inhabit a nude women, trying to figure out a way to escape their prisons. The subject of Figure 4, visible through the fogged glass that blurs her figure, is squeezed in to the point of not being able to sit up, she is reduced to a four-legged animal who is forced to look down. She keeps switching positions, repeatedly pushing the walls and the glass of the box with her both her hands and feet, even punching and kicking at desperate moments. With no luck of getting out, the two-minute loop seamlessly restarts. Five nude females are the 'inmates' of Figure 5; even though they have more space to move around, stand up and walk from one side to the other, they are nonetheless successful in finding an exit and escaping their prison. Pushing every possible surface without dialogue or clothing, and continuously going over each other, they appear no different than caged animals. With the boxes being the original filming sets, and the videos being high quality, it is close to impossible for the audience to realize that there is in fact no one inside the box; they are deluded into taking the LCD screen playing a video on loop for the actual fogged glass.

Moreover, the size of the artwork triggers an augmented shock from the audience; seeing a life-size female figure takes their puzzlement one step further

and tricks them into thinking that the work might be a performance art. By placing the screen inside the same three-dimensional box barely big enough for one person, Marck successfully creates the illusion that the box is an inhumane prison, and that there is indeed a real, alive woman who exists in the audience's reality, trapped in front of them. While thinking "Can she breathe? How much time does she have left before she runs out of oxygen?" the audience goes back and forth between this portal created by Marck—are they the spectator watching an artist perform live, are they the spectator watching a video piece, or are they culpable for being passive witnesses to a pleading desperate woman? By replicating the exact conditions of the original set while re-creating it in the post-production phase, and staging a device (fogged glass) that stands for and mimics the screen, Marck formulates a technical illusion that is able to create a gateway between the virtual and the real, breaking the fourth wall concretely.

A powerful element that contributes to this reaction of shock is the illusion created by the touch— as the subjects distort their real bodies while filming in order to fit their cramped prisons and push the fogged glass for an attempt to escape, the audience can see their digital bodies flexing and naturally rubbing past the glass wall. Every time their bodies, appearing as blurred silhouettes behind the fogged glass, press against the fogged glass, the female subjects' skins become clear and focused on the screen, adding depth to the rest of their obscure bodies and contributing to the illusion of the three-dimensionality of the screen. Every time their body parts become clear through their touch, the fourth wall is concretely broken; the subjects are now a part of our world and are actually touching the box in front of us— the audience is convinced that the digital subjects can see them and are calling out to them through this physical contact. Marck's constant reminder of the screen versus his unique way of emphasizing the realness of skin further adds to the illusion and the puzzlement of the audience.

Marck's illusion is so powerful that if the screen was covered after seeing the prisoner subjects, the audience would still be convinced that there were indeed pleading women inside. This unique effect underlines the artist's revolutionary technique that seems to be rejecting the 'suspension of belief' in the same way

theater does, not by creating an illusionistic third dimension done by film, but by finding a transcendental gateway between the two worlds of fiction and real. Making his “actors” physically feel like they are a part of the audience’s world, in a manner as genuine as theater where the audience and actors share the same space, Marck treats his screen as the “proscenium arch.” Knowing that what they see would not be any different whether there was a real woman behind those “fogged glasses,” or whether it was a recreation of the glass by an LCD screen, the audience is emotionally devoted, and utterly shocked.

Kinetic Elements as Gateway

Focusing on the artist as illusionist, a recurrent motif has been that of entrapment, in the pool and an iron container, or more literally, in the box. We have analyzed how Marck genuinely breaks the fourth wall and invents a gateway through illusionistic and non-illusionistic strategies in order to shock his audience. To fully comprehend how the artist moves towards a model of authentically breaking the fourth wall, it is worthwhile to analyze a couple of other challenging works by Marck that incorporate physical, tangible, three dimensional elements other than wooden and iron framing devices. In some cases, Marck takes his illusion one step forward, and fuses his frames with different states of matter such as fire, water, and gas. Breaking the constraints of the flat screen by embellishing its exterior with tangible matters, Marck puzzles the audience with the simultaneous operation of his subjects across digital and real spaces, strengthening his illusion of video subjects being physically present.

Moving onto the next work, *Untitled* (2011) (Fig. 6), where the female subject is engulfed in flames via computer animation inside a video box, we will observe a concrete gateway is created through actual flames in the audience’s reality accompanying the digital flames surrounding the subject. Furthermore, we will revisit how the illusion of a prison and the motif of entrapment necessarily trigger a visceral reaction, this time by a ‘prisoner’ subject who does not seem to be disturbed or begging to the audience for their help.

Scaled to the size of an average woman, the subject of Figure 6 is in contrast with the almost always naked, natural looking and hopeless subjects of Marck's artworks; she is wearing a pink floral dress, chandelier earrings and heavy makeup. Despite her much worse situation of being surrounded by flames compared to other female subjects, she is very calm and composed, looking around in boredom, fixing her hair, and at times directly confronting the audience with her daring gaze. Completely unaffected by one of the worst situations the audience fears happening to them, she elicits a sentimental identification on the side of the viewer, the terrifying situation of burning inside a box further demands their attention and emotional investment, although, her superhuman power to not suffer while burning and remaining intact in turn, becomes so intimidating that they eventually have to look away.

In Figure 6, Marck blurs the barrier between the real and the virtual is his deep exploration of and rebellion against boundaries. Breaking the flat plane of video free by manipulating the screen with various devices, Marck places a round hole on top of the video sculpture where actual flames come out. As Hadorn observes, "the piece really burns. Special flammable indoor fluid is in charge for this."⁹ Carrying his footage and subjects outside conventional displays, Marck expands the fire surrounding the digital subject into the realm of the viewer's reality, creating a gateway between the fictional fire and the real fire that can actually hurt the audience with a simple touch. Paralleling its subject, the wooden frame miraculously seems not to be affected by the fire, and stays unaltered. The great appeal to the onlooker lies in the gateway Marck creates through the primitive element of fire and the primal fear of burning. Becoming part of the audience's world, the flames surrounding the digital subject psychologically threaten the audience due to their natural instinct to empathize and imagine themselves in that perceived situation.

It is interesting to tackle the controversy between the artist going out of his way to create the illusion of an actual burning box with a person in it, and that

⁹ Hadorn, Marck: Works, 61.

same person being absolutely at odds with his realism device of fire. Even if they are so close to believing this illusion, Marck breaks that same illusion he creates through the passive actions of his female subject by giving the audience an image utterly false and impossible. On this point, Hadorn declares in the Licht Feld Gallery catalogue:

“Marck succeeds in confronting us with the Ur-Angst (primal fear). His interpretation elicits a range of emotions always outdone by the irresistible urge to watch just a little while longer. The woman moves gracefully, searching for a way out, seemingly unaffected by the hopelessness of her situation yet never losing faith in her ability to break out. This struggle, familiar to all of us since birth, the fear of failure and untimely death...”¹⁰

In response to the question of why his subjects remain calm in alarming situations (see Appendix), Marck touches on the idea that “the frame is the limit” and that “its boundaries represent societal conventions we accept on a daily basis.” He in turn asks, “why should they [female subjects]” panic “when we are not?”

Other instances Marck installs dynamic elements around his sculptures to break the fourth wall happens with smoke, water, light, and even hair. In *Art student* (2014) (Fig. 7), the artist features a female wearing a black tank top, with tattoos on one of her arms, smoking a cigarette in slow motion. Installing a humidifier on the left side of the frame where she exhales the smoke to, Marck extends a digital activity into the gallery space. Creating a gateway between the real and the virtual through the smoke that comes out at a perfectly simultaneity with the woman’s exhaling, Marck establishes the illusion of a living, breathing and smoking subject in front of the audience.

Direct Causal Connection as Gateway

In *Fresh* (2016) (Fig. 9), Marck features the video of a woman wearing a platinum blonde wig and a white tank top as her hair blows in the wind. Attaching a fan to the right side of the video sculpture, and gluing pieces of the same hair

¹⁰ Hadorn, Marck: Works, 9.

across the left side of the frame, the artist makes his work overall look like a whole. Creating a cause and effect relationship between real and virtual pieces, the audience immediately connects these objects from different dimensions, and cannot help but believe that the fan in front of them is causing the virtual woman's hair to blow. Breaking the fourth wall by concretely carrying the digital into the realm of the audience, Marck successfully connects external devices with the fictional video, and creates a gateway between them, shocking the audience with the illusion.

On / off (2015) (Fig. 8) stars two females, directly confronting the audience inside two separate iron boxes closed off with nails, attached to the wall. In front of each woman is a pull-chain that hangs from an ambiguous origin. A light bulb, in the space of the audience, is located on top of each frame, perfectly aligned to be perceived as attached to the pull-chain. As the virtual women pull the virtual pull-chains, the real light bulbs turn on and off, illuminating and darkening the spaces inhabited by the digital subjects, as well as the real space of the audience. It is close to impossible for the audience to imagine that the light bulbs are activated and deactivated automatically; they are convinced through their logic that these virtual women, looking directly at them, are causing the light to switch on and off with their movements. By blending notions of real and virtual time and space through the existence and dynamism of the light bulbs, Marck succeeds in concretely breaking the fourth wall, and creating the illusion of cause and effect. Marck's video sculptures result in an illusion that become part of the audience's world; whether they are physical or psychological, his work makes the audience question and discover their own limits.

The videos of Marck assume the shapes of the original places they were shot in. By preserving the shape of the original "set," it can be said that the artist duplicates material and temporal reality, and carries a past action into the audience's present. In a way, Marck has invented a sort of time machine in video art, and figured out how to create the illusion of simultaneity between the present of the audience and the present of the filmed subject. The real illusion, Marck creates, is the transformation of mere screens into windows to the world of video

subjects. Windows, whether open or closed, represent the gateway between the worlds of the audience and the fictional subjects.

Turning his sculptural frames into spatial dimensions female subjects try to break through, Marck goes beyond a contextual meaning towards an almost purely material reaction to his works. Marck's visually powerful sculptures encourage the viewer to fully engage with their dimensionality, materiality, composition, and montage, rather than their contextual meaning. "The video should not tell a story," emphasizes the artist, "but trigger an emotion by the viewers."¹¹ The moving images thus voluntarily or involuntarily become self-reflexive and metafictional; they prevent the audience from getting caught up in the plot by drawing awareness of the physicality. They become moving images about moving images. With technique in the background, Marck's goal of immediate reaction and evoking powerful feelings of shock in the audience takes superiority, which results in the creation of illusion through claustrophobically kinetic video sculptures.

¹¹ <http://www.marck.tv/pdf/MARCK%20Biographie.pdf>

CHAPTER TWO

Situating Marck Amongst Video Sculptors

Chapter Two aims to place Marck historically and contextually between other experimental moving image artists from different generations who have specifically combined video with sculpture. Defining them as “video sculptors,” this chapter will feature revolutionary artworks by video, new media and installation artists under the umbrella of the genre “video sculpture” and analyze the points of intersection Marck’s artworks have with them. Examining Marck’s engagement with physical representation through illusion in relation to new media artists Nam June Paik, Paul McCarthy, Pipilotti Rist, Ana Mendieta, Vito Acconci, Bill Viola, Shigeo Kubota, and Tony Oursler, this chapter will situate him in a landscape of video artists who also play on the conventions of video display using moving image in their unique ways in order to captivate and puzzle their audience, creating an illusion of video breaking its flatness and extending into the realm of audience.

Revolting against the frame and breaking the fourth wall in the world of representational visual art in novel techniques while constantly reminding the audience that there is indeed a screen in front of them, these artists rebel against the traditional ways of displaying video art, shocking, and even transforming their audience. Exploring how these revolutionary artists break the fourth wall by engaging the viewer’s imagination, bringing them away from “their inactive state as compliant observers,”¹² Chapter Two will then investigate how Marck differentiates himself in this context and achieves striking responses from his engagement with physical dimensionality as such, to further support my contention that such responses have not been achieved previously in video art.

¹² Ariel Rogers, *Cinematic Appeals: The Experience of New Movie Technologies* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2013), 28.

Illusion and Early Video Sculpture

When the Portapak was released by Sony in 1967, the video camera was put into the hands of public for the very first time. Greatly attracted to the immediacy of video and its rapid viewing capability, artists quickly started experimenting with this new tool, becoming the directors, stars, editors and producers of their own videos. When video art emerged as a new medium, “a fundamental idea held by the first generation of video artists was that in order to have a critical relationship with a televisual society, [they] must primarily participate televisually,” as Christine Hill notes.¹³ Therefore, was born the first video sculptures in the shape of actual television monitors– the medium early video artists were rebelling against, because of their concern over the expanding existence of television in the American household and the passive, apathetic audience type it was creating. As Michael Rush underlines in *New Media in Art*, the excitement of the unlimited possibilities of using new technological media “to render meaning and new ideas of time and space,” encouraged early video artists to explore and often subvert “both the critical and technological potentials” of this new medium.¹⁴

Greatly intrigued by the idea of shocking their inactive audience and rendering them active viewers with their newly acquired video cameras, early video artists started using synthesizers in their videos. Adjusting the camera to face the monitor and respond to the feedback in which the camera sees itself, the self-referential video created electronic waves and circles, resulting in abstract moving images. Known as the pioneer of video art, the Korean born American artist Nam June Paik was the first to utilize televisual electronic media in art, recognizing “the TV as more than a content delivery mechanism,” making his video sculpture monitors broadcast abstract imagery unusual to the masses.¹⁵ In his 1966 piece *Beatles Electronique* (Fig. 10), Paik used synthesizers and electromagnetic forces to manipulate and improvise instantaneous distortions on the live broadcast video

¹³ Rush, *New Media in Art*, 29.

¹⁴ Rush, *New Media in Art*, 9.

¹⁵ Artsy, “Nam June Paik.”

image of a Beatles performance. Agitating and disturbing the trans-like state of the audience, Paik refuses the interpellative quality of television which captivates and does not allow for critical objectivity. Removing TV from its traditional setting of a household to the unconventional space of the museum, Paik founded video sculpture, transforming the role of TV from a machine that pacifies the viewer to an artwork that shocks them, making them aware of their highly receptive state of pre-subjectivity and freeing them from the hypnosis of mass media culture.

Passionate about exploring the human condition through the eyes of his technological creations, Paik created numerous robots, robots who were brought to 'life' by walking and talking, or by the moving imagery playing on them. His first life-size robot, *Robot K-456* (Fig. 11) created in 1964 was a life-size "20-channel radio-controlled anthropomorphic robot" who could walk, nod its head, rotate its breasts, bow his body, raise his arms, "talk" through its tape recorder activated manually, and even "defecate" dried white beans through its mechanism located in the "pseudo-anatomical position as a real person."¹⁶ Paik recounts his creation of *Robot K-456* (Fig. 11) which he deliberately constructed for street actions: "I imagined it would meet people on the street and give them a split-second surprise. Like a sudden shower." Breaking the fourth wall by existing and moving in the real space of the audience, interacting with them directly through its "twin motor-propeller eyes" and able to perform human activities in its robotic way, *Robot K-456* (Fig. 11) gives the illusion of having somewhat consciousness through its size, dynamism and functions, resulting in a puzzlement by the audience.

Experimenting with the electronic media available to him, Paik then created robots composed of electronic components, untraditional materials, radios and television sets, with each set forming a part of the bodies of these video sculptures, bringing them to 'life.' Inserting these video sculptures with various moving images, Paik created the illusion of a robot having consciousness, foreshadowing today's AI technologies in the 1960s. His 2002 video sculpture *Bakelite Robot* (Fig. 12) is composed of nine vintage Bakelite radios installed with screens, forming the

¹⁶ Cybernetic Zoo, "Nam June Paik."

shape of a smaller than life-size robot. Despite the immobility of its 'limbs,' the robot is rendered kinetic due to the moving image of the screens playing footage from science fiction movies edited by Paik, fixed to *Bakelite Robot's* (Fig. 12) mouth, hands, torso and legs. These uncomplex machines result in the illusion of being conscious robots although they lack the AI software. Their movements and screens with moving imagery delude their audience into thinking that they have agency over their actions, questioning their experiences and perceptions of comprehending video, challenging their unquestioned notions of reality.

With video images becoming less and less about the information they possess and more about their engagement with the audience and pure aesthetics, breaking the fourth wall to get a reaction out of the audience shifted to be a priority amongst experimental video sculptors. While Nam June Paik was turning television monitors into video sculptures in order to transform the conventional video image from a literal representation to an artistic interpretation, and physically break the fourth wall, other artists were also experimenting with the medium's capabilities in order to confront and shock their audiences. In his compelling 1972 video piece *Undertone* (Fig. 13) the chief of conceptual art Vito Acconci breaks the fourth wall when he confrontationally attempts to captivate the audience in a private and ultimately corrupt affiliation with the artist. Showcased inside a TV monitor that employs the medium of video sculpture, *Undertone* (Fig. 13) features the artist sitting at the end of a long table, repeatedly telling the audience "I want to believe there is a girl here under this table, who is resting her hands on my knees." By giving the illusion that the audience is located at the end of the table, on the invisible chair (camera) he is facing and demanding them to "stay fixed there," Acconci breaks the fourth wall and renders the audience active members of his video. As David Antin suggests in his 1975 *Artforum* article "Television: Video's Frightful Parent," Acconci carries on "a rambling dialogue that shifts back and forth between the camera/spectator and himself" and "sexualizes the implicit contract between performer and viewer—the viewer serving as a

voyeur who makes the performance possible by watching and completing the scene, believing the fantasy.¹⁷

Recognized for his aggravating multimedia installations and sculptures that cheekily blend high and low culture, Paul McCarthy is part of the video sculptors who break the fourth wall between the real and the virtual, creating the illusion that the artwork could not exist without the audience. In his 1974 video piece *Spitting on the Camera Lens* (Fig. 14), McCarthy plays with looking at the camera to activate his audience, and continuously spits 'on them'. Although the screen acts as a 'protection layer' that prevents them from actually being spat on by the artist, thus the breaking of the fourth wall is not as genuine, the reaction of the audience is usually not getting too close, or covering their faces by reflex. In these types of video sculptures where the video subjects are directly confronting and interacting with the audience, as Marshall McLuhan declares, "the medium is the message."¹⁸ Even though the videos are constantly reminding the audience that they are in the presence of technological creations through the existence of the television monitors, the audience cannot help but engage with them as if the video subjects are present in their space due to the artists' innovative ways of breaking the fourth wall.

In his 1976 video *The Space Between Teeth* (Fig. 15), Bill Viola is sitting in the distance, at the end of a dim, lengthy hallway. The camera, located at the opposite end of the hallway, rushes towards the artist at a high speed each time he screams, going all the way inside his mouth, just to go back to the end of the hallway again. The hallway and the composition of the camera's advancement towards the video subjects gives the illusion that the world of the audience is merged with the world of the video subject, acting as "metaphors for passage and transition between two worlds, bridged by the individual's cathartic screams."¹⁹

In her 2018 article "How Shigeo Kubota Pioneered Video as a Personal Medium," Karen Kedmy recounts the birth of video art and describes how this

¹⁷ Antin, "Television," 38.

¹⁸ McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message*, 48.

¹⁹ Electronic Arts Intermix, "Four Songs."

entirely new art form designated “fathers of the medium” namely “Peter Campus, Bill Viola, and, perhaps most prominently, Nam June Paik.”²⁰ However, she emphasizes that “video art had mothers, too—and central among them is Shigeko Kubota,” a key member of the Fluxus group in the early 1960s New York, and the wife of Nam June Paik.

Kubota’s 1976 artwork *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase* (Fig. 16) was the first video sculpture acquired by Museum of Modern Art New York (MOMA). Featuring four video monitors installed in a wooden staircase of four steps, *Duchampiana* (Fig. 16) showcases a nude female body walking down the stairs. Merging the fictional world of the video subject with the peripheral space of the audience through the physical recreation of the subject’s staircase, Kubota joins fellow video sculptors in breaking the fourth wall in her exploration of the aesthetic and technological potentials of this new medium, spatially reorienting her audience.

Experimenting with video outside of the boundaries of the conventional television monitor ever since holding his first camcorder, a Sony Betamovie in 1983, the multimedia artist Tony Oursler is known as one of the pioneers of freeing the moving image from the “black box.”²¹ Projecting video images of talking faces onto unconventional three-dimensional objects such as sculptures, animal organs, buildings and puppets, Oursler’s unique way of creating haunting illusions became revolutionary in video art. Breathing life into lifeless objects by projecting faces who directly confront and talk to the audience, the artist achieves a novel manner of breaking the fourth wall that goes beyond mere eye contact.

In his 1995 piece *The Most Beautiful Thing I’ve Never Seen* (Fig. 17) Oursler traps a rag doll under the leg of a couch and projects the face of a complaining man on its fabric head. Not shying away from hiding his technical apparatus, the artist leaves the light beam projector in front of the piece, shocking the audience with both the physicality of the projector and the realism of an actual consciousness he

²⁰ Artsy, “Shigeko Kubota.”

²¹ Janus, Tony Oursler, 246.

creates with it. Puzzled, the audience forces themselves to not believe the doll's articulate stream of consciousness and not empathize with its pain.

The dramatic testaments of the doll with a human face and consciousness give rise to a "beyond-the-grave and future world," as Raymond Bellour declares.²² Taking his series of dolls one step forward in the 21st century, Oursler creates humanoids possessing AI. Inviting the audience to "glimpse themselves from another perspective, that of the machines we have recently created," the artist's 2017 clan of four robotic glass video sculptures *b0t / flow - ch@rt* (Fig. 18) with eyes and mouths that can make eye contact and talk, give a perplexing glance at what the future would look like with the presence of these life-size humanoids who can think and engage with humans.²³ While breaking the fourth wall with his robots' facial recognition technology, Oursler discloses once again the reality of his video sculptures, and demonstrates the computer circuitry, technical machinery and cables that give the illusion of robotic consciousness through the very transparency of the glass that gives these human-like figures their form. Persistently reminding his audience the artificiality of his creations' intelligence and unmasking their "magical" consciousness by exposing their technical "making of's, Oursler disturbs and shocks his audience by their yet powerful presence, and plays with the audience's limit of believing something unreal. As a consequence, the audience is removed from their typical passive state in a unique way.

Recognized with her productions of multi-projector video installations that blend the physical and the metaphysical in what have been referred to as "near-psychedelic experiences," the Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist's produces unique attempts to break down the fourth wall between the real and the virtual.²⁴ Known for her immersive installations, bewitching use of color, and idiosyncratic take on life, the artist plants her monumental video sculptures in unusual areas in exhibition spaces, pushing her fictional subjects into the realm of the audience, deluding and shocking them in return. A pioneer in video and installation art since 1997, Rist is

²² Bellour, "Saving the Image," 73.

²³ Lisson Gallery, "Tony Oursler."

²⁴ Artsy, "About Pipilotti Rist."

in conversation with Marck in the illusions she creates with her video sculptures and choice of subject matter.

Comprised of a microscopic video installed inside a hole in the exhibition space, debuting in Basel, Switzerland in 1994, *Selfless in a Bath of Lava* (Fig. 19) features the nude artist burning in a luminous lava bath from a bird's eye view. Echoing Marck's *Untitled* (Fig. 6) featuring the indifferent female subject engulfed in flames, the naked body of Rist seems not to be affected by the deathly lava surrounding her. Similarly portraying a lethal situation which the audience would be terrified to be trapped in, Rist does not cry for help and attempts to get out. In contrast, the young Rist looks up and makes direct eye contact with audience who is looking down at her, continuously screaming at them in puzzles: "I am a worm, you are a flower! You would have done everything better!" Bewildered by not direct and urgent, but poetic and ambiguous words, the audience is greatly intrigued by this miniature woman and feels obliged to lean forward.

"I always try to create equal power between the subject and the object, so as not to end up creating a relationship where the camera is here and object out there," declares Rist, emphasizing the aspect of illusion in her works. "When I produce a work, cut and frame images, I realize the spectators can identify with the images and almost forget that someone else actually made them."²⁵ Although they know it is merely a screen, Rist's work acts like a portal into the underworld (potentially the Earth's core, or even Hell) and creates the illusion that there is actually a tiny woman screaming at the audience from beneath their feet. By not placing her flat video *Selfless in a Bath of Lava* (Fig. 19) directly on the wall, but almost hiding it on the floor, between the wooden strips, where the audience accidentally steps on the virtual subject, Rist attempts to break free from the representational space (the flat surface of the screen) into the space of the audience while the illusion of an evil dimension beneath the audience's feet is created.

²⁵ Art Monthly, "Caressing Space."

A pioneer in creating expanded installations for video, Rist breaks all conventions of display and turns environments upside down in creating her 2016 immersive video sculptures *4th Floor to Mildness* (Fig. 20) in the New Museum in New York. Announcing her desire to “create spaces for video art that rethink the very nature of the medium itself,” Rist places massive screens defined by cloud-like abstract shapes in the ceiling and completely transforms the audience’s knowledge of what a frame is, breaking the idea of a frontal looking experience.²⁶ Displaying her close-up footage of the underwater world on top of the audience, the artist turns their world upside down. Used to having the underwater world ‘under’ them, the audience is encouraged to experience her videos laying down on cushion beds and look up. Unlike a video playing on a screen acting like a window into another world, independent of the space it is displayed in, *4th Floor to Mildness* (Fig. 20) acts like a video sculpture by being shown on the ceiling and taking into account the space around it. Having a presence, a depth, a volume in the New Museum exhibition space, Rist’s work is immersive, and fulfills the role of a video sculpture.

Editing the larger than life-size underwater imagery of seaweeds and fish with close up segments of the human body, *4th Floor to Mildness* (Fig. 20) evokes fantastic, strange and teasing reactions in the audience, whose reality is completely blurred and transformed. “The idea is that now we’ve explored the whole geographical world,” claims Rist, pictures or films are the new, unexplored spaces into which we can escape.”²⁷ Creating the illusion that these screens are windows to the outside world beyond the gallery space, and the water has replaced the sky, *4th Floor to Mildness* (Fig. 20) mesmerizes its audience in this world of fantasy, hypnotizing them in its viscerality.

Rist not only breaks down the fourth wall by creating this illusion, but by encouraging the audience to take their shoes off and lie down on individual beds, she also breaks down the boundary between private and public space, convincing the audience that they are entering a highly ambiguous and stimulating environment, and that they need to leave their reality behind upon entry.

²⁶ Artnet, “Pipilotti Rist.”

²⁷ Hauser&Wirth, “Pipilotti Rist.”

Starting in the 1970s, the act of pressing one's body against the glass has become a tradition amongst artists such as Ana Mendieta in *Untitled (Glass on Body)* (Fig. 21), a 1972 series of photographs where she presses her body parts onto a square glass sheet she is holding. As she presses her face and parts against the glass, her skin gets deformed, her youthful face and body are transformed into an unpleasing, malleable material. By using her skin as a malleable material, Mendieta molds her intact, youthful features in order to reconsider the human figure and confronting gaze. Transferring this notion onto video, Paul McCarthy uses the camera lens as "glass" and presses his salivating face against it in his 1975 video *Spit Face*, confronting the audience with a distasteful imagery. The act of pressing his body against the camera lens creates the illusion that the virtual subject attempts to escape the screen that acts as his prison, and that he wants to break free into the realm of the audience.

Pipilotti Rist brings a completely innovative approach to this skin-against-glass/lens tradition with her 2000 piece *Open My Glade (Flatten)* (Fig. 22). In this groundbreaking work, Rist once again goes beyond the conventional frame to display her video, and this time to play her videos, chooses the surface of numerous skyscrapers in the iconic district of flashing neon lights and gigantic virtual billboards, Times Square, New York, turning buildings into video sculptures. *Open My Glade* (Fig. 22) features the enormous face of a middle-aged blonde woman with blue eyes, pressing her face and both of her hands against the screen, slowly rubbing her skin one side to another, leaving traces of her makeup as she goes. The same work is repeated across seven skyscrapers next to each other at Times Square. Being located high up on the skyscrapers and multiplied several times, she is impossible to miss or ignore. The scale of her eyes and her direct gaze result in her eye contact with every single person that looks up at her.

Used to seeing massive, glossy, overtly fictional commercials as they walk by, the Times Square audience is utterly shocked at the sight of the raw directness of the subject's gaze with them. Through placing *Open My Glade* (Fig. 22) in an iconic square and blasting it onto skyline surfaces, Rist augments the intensity of the psychological and emotional effect in the audience as a result of the immense

physicality of the work. As Christine Ross declares in “The Temporalities of Video: Extendedness Revisited,” “she becomes a body we project onto- we ‘become’ her giant televisual body.”²⁸ The resulting reaction is a “flash of identification” as the audience has an out of body experience; the fourth wall concretely established between the Times Square billboards and their audience throughout history is broken once and for all. Through this representation and subject-object exchange, the screen no longer is seen as a border separating one’s self from the other. Instead, the screen is, as Oliver Asselin states, “a deep site of interchange where self and other recognize their profound reciprocity and even simultaneity, or the fact that there is no ‘present’ subject (or signifier, or referent) but only subjects (signifiers/referents) who take on constantly mutating shapes and meanings in relation to one another.”²⁹ While they empathize with the female prisoner, they are also frightened by her inhuman behavior of aggressively pressing her face against the screen, and her monstrous appearance as a result of her skin layers blending together on a flat surface. As a result, even though they know that by the scale of the video, this scenario is fiction, the audience is nevertheless activated, captivated, shocked; they are prompted to think about the connection between reality and illusion.

Marck’s Transformative Approach

Marck continues this skin on glass/camera lens tradition and produces a number of works where trapped subjects press their skin against fogged glass surfaces in order to test its boundaries and attempt to engage with the real world. Similar to Rist, Marck films naked female subjects pressing their skin on the camera lens, and reproduces the scenario in a way to create the illusion that

An instance other Figures 4 and 5 dealing with this method can be seen in the artist’s 2011 video sculpture *Fliege*, (Fig. 23) where a fly is walking across the “other side” of the screen for a whole minute. Walking on the surface, the fly

²⁸ Ross, “Video,” 89.

²⁹ Asselin, *Precarious Visualities*, 152.

disappears behind the fogged glass, in the virtual world when it flies away. This visual play prepares for the arrival of the subject, by warming up the audience in believing the illusion that it is not a screen in front of them but a window into the world of the other. When the fly appears and starts walking on the other side of the screen again, the audience sees the silhouette of a human, slowly approaching. Suddenly pressing her hands and mouth against the screen, she traps the fly with her tongue and eats it. She then walks away, disappearing behind the fogged glass, into her world.

Not being able to tell whether what they just witnessed was real or not, the audience is puzzled. Unlike most of his other works where subjects attempt to escape, the subject of Figure 23 seems to have coincidentally appeared in our world due to a fly and does not seem to have any thoughts of running away and being part of our world. With the fogged glass blurring the mysterious world she inhabits, the video sculpture authentically breaks the fourth wall through filming the skin against the camera lens, and replacing the lens with a screen in the audience's reality. With the fogged glass acting as a gateway between the real and the virtual, the audience's world becomes the world outside of the subject, isolated yet connected. Echoing Pipilotti Rist's *Open My Glade* (Fig. 22) and creating a similar, only more intimate life-size scenario, Marck renders the breaking of the fourth wall stronger, liberating the audience from their passive role and shocking them as they are deluded by the subject's physical reality.

While in the 1970s television monitors taken outside of households into exhibition spaces formed the very first video sculptures, towards the end of the 20th century these mediums were replaced by unusual three-dimensional surfaces, freeing the moving image from their traditional, flat representations. Although most video artists were loyal to the conventions of filming, some of them (the artists discussed in this chapter) were eager to break the fourth wall and activate the otherwise dormant audience by their shocking illusions. Whereas artists such as Tony Oursler and Pipilotti Rist carried their sensational visuals on unconventional objects such as rag dolls, robots and buildings in order to create their video sculptures, Marck went back to the idea of the "box," creating prisons

for his human subjects in order to break the fourth wall in a genuine way. Showcasing unedited, raw footage, Marck achieved a cloning effect never achieved in video art prior to him, replicating the exact conditions of his sets in the reality of the audience. In contrast to Oursler who gives consciousness to his video sculptures, or Rist who turns the audience's reality upside down, Marck treats his works as actual boxes in which real people inhabit, preserving the reality of the video sculpture and infusing it with life. One can argue that while video sculptors such as Oursler and Rist are able to captivate their audience during their engagement with the artwork, and shock them with their novel ways of breaking the fourth wall, Marck is the one who can attempt at transforming them.

CHAPTER 3

A Reading of Marck's Video Sculptures Through Bataille's *Erotism*

“As often as not, it seems to be assumed that man has his being independently of his passions. I affirm, on the other hand, that we must never imagine existence except in terms of these passions...We are discontinuous beings, individuals who perish in isolation in the midst of an incomprehensible adventure, but we yearn for our lost continuity. We find the state of affairs that binds us to our random and ephemeral individuality hard to bear. Along with our tormenting desire that this evanescent thing should last, there stands our obsession with a primal continuity linking us with everything that is... this nostalgia is responsible for... eroticism in man.”

–Georges Bataille, *Erotism*³⁰

The Ontological Value of Marck's Physicality

Chapter 3 will continue the pursuit of understanding whether Marck's video sculptures transform the audience, or whether the shock they create is temporary. Having analyzed the reaction of puzzlement created by the material illusion of Marck's works in Chapter 1, and having situated him among other video sculptors creating astounding illusions in Chapter 2, we will strive to comprehend the artist's revolutionary video sculptures through the lens of Georges Bataille's theory on eroticism and transcendence. This final chapter exploring the “eroticism” of Marck's works contextually in Bataille's terms, together with the previously conducted material and comparative analyses will facilitate our attempt to understand the effect in totality of the artist's works on the audience, and whether this effect results in a catharsis.

In *Erotism*, Bataille lays out the theory that eroticism is a transcendental value fundamental to our civilization. Declaring that transcendent states can be reached through the body's attainment of a state outside of itself, Bataille links this transcendental value to the materiality of our bodies, inasmuch as it is brought into

³⁰ Georges Bataille, *Erotism*, trans. Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1986), 12.

play by the sexuality of our mortal bodies, birth of a child, death, the ineffably earthbound act of defecation, or acts of violence that bring the body closer to death. Acts of violence can also bring their spectators closer to a state of transcendence in the suggestion of the destruction of other bodies. Not only do Marck's three-dimensional video sculptures bring the viewer towards a state of transcendence in their suggestion of the possible eventual destruction of other bodies (the bodies inside of the sculptures); they are erotic in their material form in that they bring that which is *human* closer to that which is an inanimate object and they are erotic in the literal nudity of their female subjects. This is an entirely correct conceptual extension of Bataille's theory; humans do not just attain a state outside of themselves through acts of violence or sexual transgression, they also do so when they become inanimate.

For instance, we can look at J.G. Ballard's novel *The Crystal World*, in which scientists examining a global calamity are taken over by crystals as they explore a crystalline jungle and die, becoming ornaments within a vast jeweled landscape. The flesh of their bodies is made one with the surrounding inanimate world through a strange process, a plague inexplicable by the commonly held truths of Western science. The scientists who are not immediately devoured by this "inanimate plague" come to worship this "crystal world" and eventually seek out their own deaths.³¹ Marck's statues are much like the inhabitants of a crystal world who we worship and wish to be made one with (in Bataille's terms).

Through Marck's breaking of the fourth wall with the realistic materiality of his works and the content of these works --female subjects trapped in claustrophobic boxes in undesirable situations -- the audience cannot help but empathize with the illusion of real suffering created by the artist's video sculptors. "Again and again," states the artist when asked about some interesting reactions to his works (see Appendix), "I learn that viewers recognize their personal history or life situation in my work. For instance, the looping or repetition of a condition of life reminds the viewer their own social constraints or conventions."

³¹ Ballard, *The Crystal World*, 12.

Thus, it can be said that the audience has an ‘out of body,’ transcendental experience in Bataille’s terms. Witnessing the threatening of other seemingly real but inanimate bodies who cannot escape their material prisons, the audience feels the ominous end that awaits the video subjects: death. Whether it ends up being the virtual death of the ‘off’ button on the side of their screen or eventual physical death caused by the illusion of entrapment, Marck’s inanimate objects bring the audience closer to the erotic sense of death and transcendence.

While Marck’s transcendence is mostly erotic in the sense that he suggests bodily harm to the sexualized female subject, the religious dimension of erotic transcendence in his works is also worthy of mention. This aspect of religion is a crucial element Bataille underlines in *Eroticism*: “The meaning of eroticism escapes anyone who cannot see its religious meaning! Reciprocally, the meaning of religion in its totality escapes anyone who disregards the link it has with eroticism. Religion is the moving force behind the breaking of taboos.”³²

So, according to this quote, if that which is sacred creates a feeling of sacredness, so too does the violation of that which is sacred create a feeling of *unholy transcendence*. In his 2010 video sculpture *Maria II* (Fig. 24), Marck not only shows the inherent affinity between body and screen, thereby attaining a state of erotic outside-of-bodiness, he also plays on Bataille’s theory of the violation of that which is sacred. This smaller-than-life-size work features the dark silhouette of a Virgin Mary on the bright white screen. Behind is the recurrent female subject in many of Marck’s works, Sandra, again naked, dancing aggressively, with animalistic gestures, going in and out of the borders of the sacred silhouette, but always staying within the boundaries of the white frame. In this “peek-a-boo” like performance, Sandra appears to be making fun of the sacredness of *Maria* (Fig. 24), waving her hands behind her, as if making hand signs one would make while their friend’s picture is being taken.

The white background suddenly turns black, making the silhouette of *Maria* (Fig. 24) clear in the foreground, turning the female subject behind her white and

³² Bataille, *Eroticism*, 69.

leaving her in the dark. Not until the subject starts moving behind her do we see her now as a white shadow, popping her head and hands out behind *Maria* (Fig. 24). The strangely superimposed figures turn back into a white background, where we see the subject in a human form again. The loop goes on.

As Michael Weingrad argues in his article “Parisian Messianism: Catholicism, Decadence, and the Transgression of Georges Bataille,” through the pursuit of a sacrilegious impulse throughout his career, Bataille “inhabits the symbolic universe of Catholicism, which he attempts to explode from within.”³³ In *Maria II* (Fig. 24), the subject seems to represent the actual woman who inhabits Virgin Mary, the sinful, erotic, naked female willing to break free from the confines of religion and her image as a sacred virgin. According to Weingrad, Bataille was heavily influenced by Marquis de Sade who believed “pornography is a form of the struggle of spirit against the flesh,” and viewed physicality as having an ontological value, which is a trait in Marck’s video sculptures, whose naked female subjects try to escape the materiality they are trapped in.³⁴ Marck, in not only purely erotic terms, but in erotically sacrilegious terms, destroys religious imagery to arrive at a new transcendence.

Marck’s 2013 artwork *Adam & Eva* (Fig. 25), a two-part smaller-than-life-size folded frame, one featuring a naked man, the other, a naked female, is fixed onto intersecting walls. In the negative space of the folded area is a red ball that seems to be floating in the air. The ball floats and stops on the female subject, covering her genitals. After hesitating a little, the virtual subject then makes a gesture of throwing the ball to the male subject with her hands, and the real ball in the audience’s realm goes to cover the male subject’s genitals. The male subject then throws it back to the female subject, she catches it only to throw it back. The playful imagery looks like they are trying to censor one another’s genitals.

With this atheistic attitude towards the religious story of Adam and Eve, Marck subverts his female subject’s name and changes it to Eva. Instead of staying loyal to the biblical story and covering their nudity with fig leaves after eating an

³³ Weingrad, “Parisian Messianism,” 116.

³⁴ Weingrad, “Parisian Messianism,” 117.

apple, the forbidden fruit, Marck's re-creation of Adam and Eve seem to be rejecting this censoring of sexuality. Interacting not through an apple, but through a completely ridiculous object, a red ball, *Adam and Eva* (Fig. 24) corrupt concrete Christian motifs with their violence of the sacred and refuse to cover their genitals, echoing Bataille's summoning and violent probing of the Catholic faith and "divinity that he lacks" through his "profane atheism."³⁵

³⁵ Weingrad, "Parisian Messianism," 117.

CONCLUSION

Skin out of Screen

In his book *Paint Made Flesh*, Marc Scala surveys a broad range of artists who have utilized paint as a metaphor for flesh since the 1950's, emphasizing that oil paint has classically been the optimal medium for bringing nudity to life. By mixing and coating paint, artists depicting nude subjects have been aiming to transform the surface as much as they can in order to make it look like actual human skin, aspiring to make the canvas as similar to flesh as possible. "Its slow drying time and various degrees of viscosity enable the artist to achieve rich and subtle blends of color and texture," asserts Scala, "which can suggest transformations from one human substance to another."³⁶

Distorting the realness of flesh, video artists depicting the nude never concerned themselves with preserving the life-like quality of the human flesh the way painters have while depicting the nude with oil paint. Always reminding the audience that there is an electronic screen in front of them by rendering their human subjects one-dimensional with flat screens, or projecting humans on unusual surfaces, video artists until Marck did not prioritize maintaining the living quality of the human skin on inanimate objects.

Marck seems to be giving the first digital response to the idea of "canvas" as "flesh" by turning his "screen" into "skin." In the video sculptures by the artist, the human body becomes something other than flesh, it becomes the screen itself. This represents a new era in video art that is a continuation of Bataille's idea of the body reaching transcendence by becoming an inanimate object whether through death, the sexual act, birth or violence. The embodiment of Bataille's theories in Marck's video sculptures is shocking and utterly transformative for the audience, for they must come face-to-face with their own entrapment and death before the unexpected material realisticness of Marck's works. On an ontological level, the artist is commenting on the human quest for transcendence in entirely arbitrary

³⁶ Scala, *Paint Made Flesh*, 53.

physical circumstances, setting earthly boundaries to his virtual subjects seeking human transcendence. On a profane level, he is putting his subjects into awful cages in order to create a drug-like feeling, a metaphysical *frisson*, in his audience.

And so, in looking back over the totality of this dissertation, it should be clear that the formal elements of Marck's work that make him unique within our canon of contemporary artists also make his work the ideal vessel for an exploration of Bataille's philosophy. In my first chapter, I examined the specific formal elements that make Marck's work an exploration of materiality that is "four-dimensional" in the way that it entraps the viewer. This "four-dimensionality" also combines the fleshiness of Marck's female subjects with the cold materiality of his medium. In my second chapter, I showed why this formal praxis is unique within the broader environment of contemporary video artists, while also demonstrating the artists who provided a concrete point of origin from which Marck strayed. Finally, in this third chapter, I demonstrate the philosophical implications of these formal innovations. Marck does not just *say* in a new way, he *says something new*.

Indeed, after deep engagement with Marck's work, it is impossible to return to the world of representative art without an entirely new perspective. How often is death and the female body put on display in the Western canon in order to tickle the viewer's transcendental nervous system? And, when it is being put on display in this way, is it always the combination of the content of the work and the materiality of the representation of a human form that is uniquely erotic? With this dissertation, I would like to call forth a new wave of scholarship that examines how the materiality of a subject within an art-object is necessarily erotic, even without reference to the content of the work. I suggest that Marck is a uniquely good model for this new wave of scholarship, as his female subjects are so tied to a complex material object that the viewer often forgets about the willfully transgressive and erotic content of the works. Without having the words to say so, the viewer already knows that Marck's video-sculptures are erotic in their binding together of screen and body without reference to the tawdry nudity of his female subjects. In Marck's case, the content is certainly arousing, but the form is far more arousing than the

content; Marck's spectator has an immediate and persistent desire to be made a part of his four-dimensional crystal world.

Word Count: 13,650

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Antin, David. "Television: Video's Frightful Parent." *Artforum* 14, no. 1 (December 1975): 36-43.
2. Artnet. "Pipilotti Rist." Accessed August 16, 2018.
<http://www.artnet.com/artists/pipilotti-rist/>
3. Artsy. "About Pipilotti Rist." Accessed August 25, 2018.
<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/pipilotti-rist-help-me>
4. Artsy. "How Shigeo Kubota Pioneered Video as a Personal Medium." Accessed August 30, 2018.
<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-shigeo-kubota-pioneered-video-personal-medium>
5. Artsy. "Nam June Paik." Accessed August 20, 2018.
<https://www.artsy.net/artist/nam-june-paik>
6. Asselin, Olivier. *Precarious Visualities: New Perspectives on Identification in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008.
7. Ballard, J.G. *The Crystal World*. Norwalk: Easton Press, 1988.
8. Basler Zeitung. "Scope II, Swiss Art I." Accessed May 12, 2018.
http://www.marck.tv/marck-presse/baz_ch%20-%20kunstrauschen%20BLOG-ganz.htm
9. Bataille, Georges. *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*. Translated by Mary Dalwood. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1986.
10. Bellour, Raymond. "Saving the Image." In *Tony Oursler*, edited by Elizabeth Janus, 73. Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2001.
11. Bickers, Patricia. "Caressing Space: Pipilotti Rist Interviewed by Patricia Bickers." *Art Monthly*, no. 350 (October 2011): 1
12. Cintay, Nur. "Dikenlere Takilan Kiz." *Radikal Newspaper*, October 19, 2008.
http://www.marck.tv/press_turky.htm

13. Cybernetic Zoo. "Nam June Paik". Accessed August 17, 2018.
<http://cyberneticzoo.com/robots-in-art/1964-robot-k-456-nam-june-paik-korean-shuya-abe-japanese/>
14. Electronic Arts Intermix. "Four Songs: Bill Viola." Accessed August 30, 2018.
<https://www.eai.org/titles/four-songs>
15. Fifer, Sally and Doug Hall. *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*. San Francisco: Aperture/Bay Area Video Coalition, 2005.
16. Hadorn, Fredy. *Marck: Works 2005-2011*. Zurich: Lichtfeld Publications, 2011.
17. Hauser & Wirth. "Pipilotti Rist." Accessed August 19, 2018.
<https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/3175-pipilotti-rist-2>
18. Hinckley, Jaren S. "Performance Anxiety: Constantin Stanislavski's Concept of Public Solitude." *College Music Symposium*, Vol 48 (2008): 124-130.
19. Janus, Elizabeth. "To Paint in Moving Images." In *Tony Oursler*, edited by Elizabeth Janus, 73. Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2001.
20. Jones, Caroline. *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg's Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
21. Marck TV. "Works." Accessed May 9, 2018.
www.marck.tv/works.htm
22. Maryland, Annapolis. "Video is playing well in Midtown Miami: Gregory Scott and Suse Lee invite viewers to pause and ponder." *Artfix Daily*, December 4, 2010.
http://www.marck.tv/artfix_daily.htm
23. McLuhan, Marshall. *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. Berkeley: Gingko Press, 2001.
24. Musser, Charles. *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
25. Paul, Willam. "Breaking the Fourth Wall: 'Belascoism', Modernism, and a 3-D Kiss Me Kate." *Film Histoey Sydney*, Vol. 16, Iss. 3 (2004): 229-242.

26. Rabinovitz, Lauren. "History of American Video Art." *Journal of Film and Video* 38, no. 3/4 (Summer-Fall 1986): 111-122
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20687744.pdf?refreqid=search%3A79e839986be64005fd2c5cf54f7aad94>
27. Rees, Alan Leonard, and Duncan White. *Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film*. London: Tate Publishing, 2011.
28. Rogers, Ariel. *Cinematic Appeals: The Experience of New Movie Technologies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
29. Ross, Christine. "The Temporalities of Video: Extendedness Revisited." *Art Journal* Vol. 65, no. 3 (Fall, 2006): 82-99.
30. Rush, Michael. *New Media in Art*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2005.
31. Scala, Mark. *Paint Made Flesh*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009.
32. Tate. "Tony Oursler: The Most Beautiful Thing I've Never Seen 1995." Accessed April 27, 2018.
<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/oursler-the-most-beautiful-thing-i-ve-never-seen-t06989>
33. Teufel, Tina. *Marck: Video Sculptures*. Stuttgart: Galerie von Braunbehrens, 2010.
34. *Video Spaces: Eight Installations*. Edited by Barbara London. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1995. Exhibition catalogue.
35. Weingrad, Michael. "Parisian Messianism: Catholicism, Decadence, and the Transgressions of Georges Bataille." *History and Memory*, Vol. 13, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2001): 113-133
36. Wynwood Art Magazine. "Marck Presse." Accessed May 17, 2018.
<http://www.marck.tv/marck-presse/wynwood.htm>
37. Wilmer, Molly Hughes. "Video is playing well in Midtown Miami: Gregory Scott and Suse Lee invite viewers to pause and ponder." *Artfix Daily*, December 4, 2010.
http://marck.tv/artfix_daily.htm
38. YouTube. "Marck." Accessed May 12, 2018.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inKvXJuR_rM

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Marck, *Neue Freiheit silver*, 2011
LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent)
34 x 20 x 9.5 in, 21:20 min.



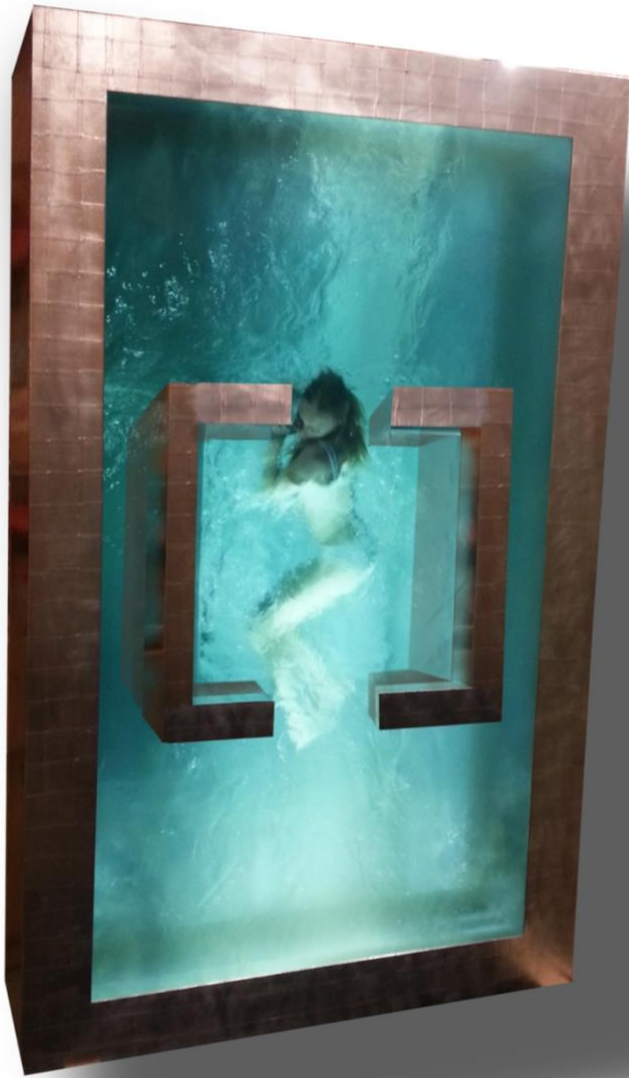
2. Marck, *Türkisches Bath*, 2008

LCD panel, chrome, iron, video (color, silent)

34 x 20 x 8 in, 09:44 min.



3. Marck, *Gegenstrom XXXL*, 2015
LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent)
165 x 85 x 40 cm, 23:43 min.



4. Marck, *Frauenkiste*, 2007
panel, iron, glass, video (color, silent)
130 x 60 x 95 cm, 09:57 min.



5. Marck, *Tank mini*, 2015

LCD panel, iron, wood, glass, video (color, silent)

150 x 300 x 40 cm, 21:41 min.



6. Marck, *Untitled*, 2011
LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent)
34 x 20 x 9.5 in, 21:31 min.



7. Marck, *Art student*, 2014

LCD panel, iron, humidifier, video (color, silent)

34 x 20 x 9.5 in, 01:16 min.



8. Marck, *On / off*, 2015,
LCD panel, iron, bulbs, video (color, silent)
45 x 95 x 16, 02:14 min.



9. Marck, *Fresh*, 2016

LCD panel, iron, propeller, video (color, silent)

34 x 20 x 9.5, 13:37 min.



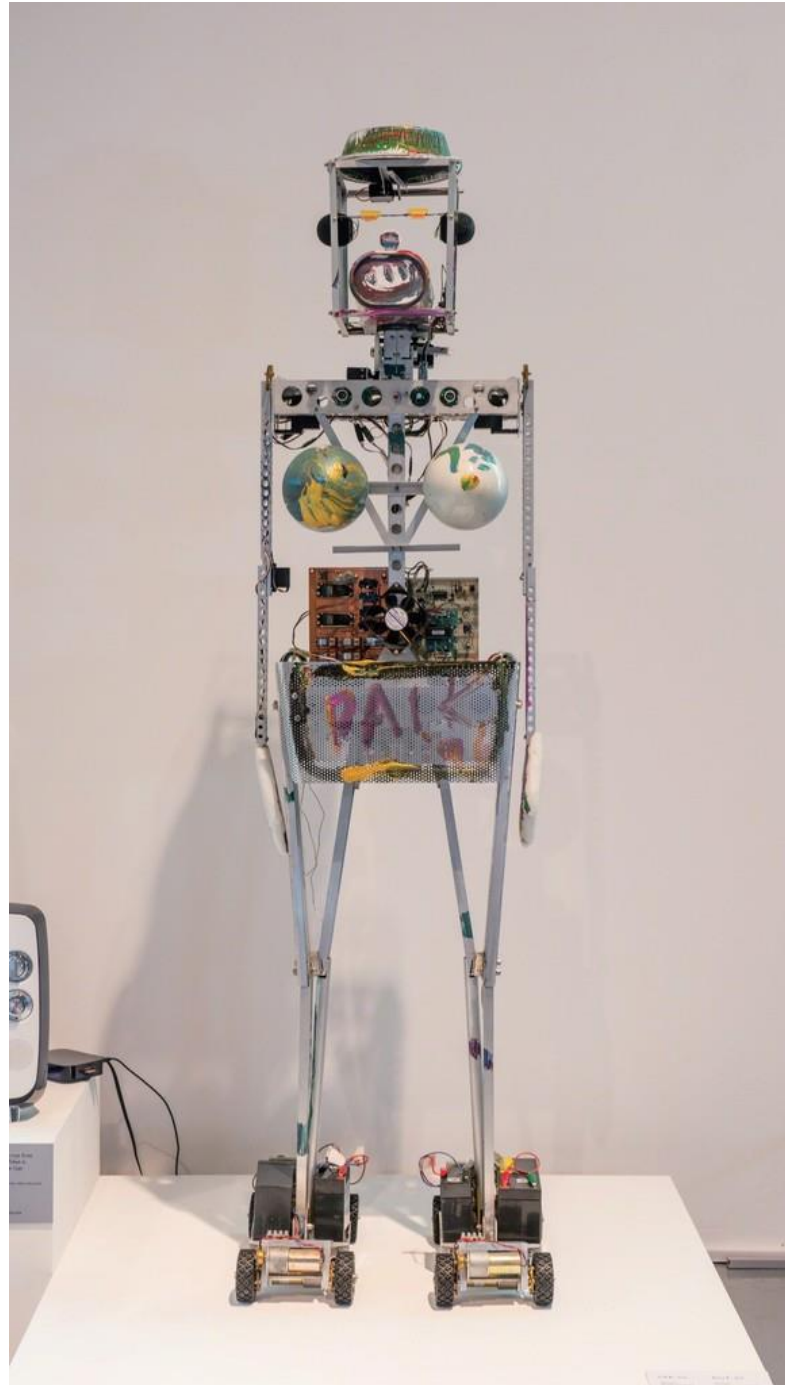
10. Nam June Paik, *Beatles Electronique*, 1966-69
analog video (color, sound), u-matic
2:59 min.



11. Nam June Paik, *Robot K-456*, 1964

steel, aluminum, fabric, electronic components, rubber, wires, foam

185 x xx x yy cm



12. Nam June Paik, *Bakelite Robot*, 2002

video, 5 monitors and radios

1200 x 920 x 205 mm, 05:05 min.



13. Vito Acconci, *Undertone*, 1972,
video (black and white, sound)
37:20 min.



14. Paul McCarthy, *Spitting on the Camera Lens*, 1974

Installation view from "Generation Loss" at Julia Stoschek Collection,
Düsseldorf Germany, 2018

video (black and white, sound), 01:00 min.



15. Bill Viola, *The Space Between Teeth*, 1976

video (color, sound)

09:12 min.



16. Shigeko Kubota, *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1976
color-synthesized video (color, silent), monitors, plywood
168.3 x 78.6 x 170.2 cm.



17. Tony Oursler, *The Most Beautiful Thing I've Never Seen*, 1995
sofa, doll, video (color, sound), projection
2100 x 2200 mm, 06:23 min.



18. Tony Oursler, *b0t / fl0w - ch@rt*, 2017
video, computer circuitry, glass, LCD screens, cables
63 x 12 x 19 in.

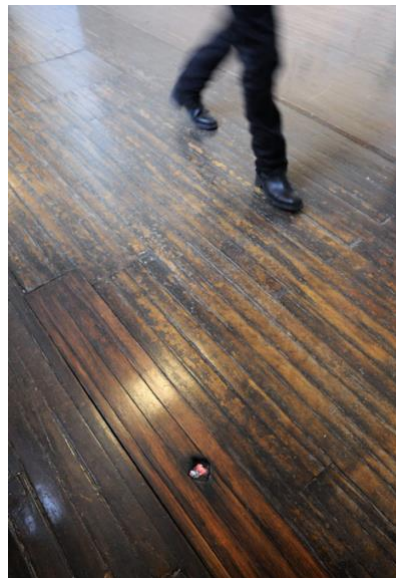


19. Pipilotti Rist, *Selfless in a Bath of Lava*, 1994

Installation views from MoMa, New York, 1994

video (color, sound), installation

01:09 min.



20. Pipilotti Rist, *4th Floor to Mildness*, 2016

video and sound installation, beds, pillows, covers, projectors, moving mirrors,
media players, audio system, net, curtain, carpet, wall paint

8:11 min.



21. Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints)*, 1972

color print, in 6 parts

49 x 32.5 cm. each



22. Pipilotti Rist, *Open My Glade (Flatten)*, 2000

Installation view Times Square, New York

single channel electronic billboard video installation (color, silent)

3:00 min.



23. Marck, *Fliege*, 2011

LCD panel, iron, video (color, silent)

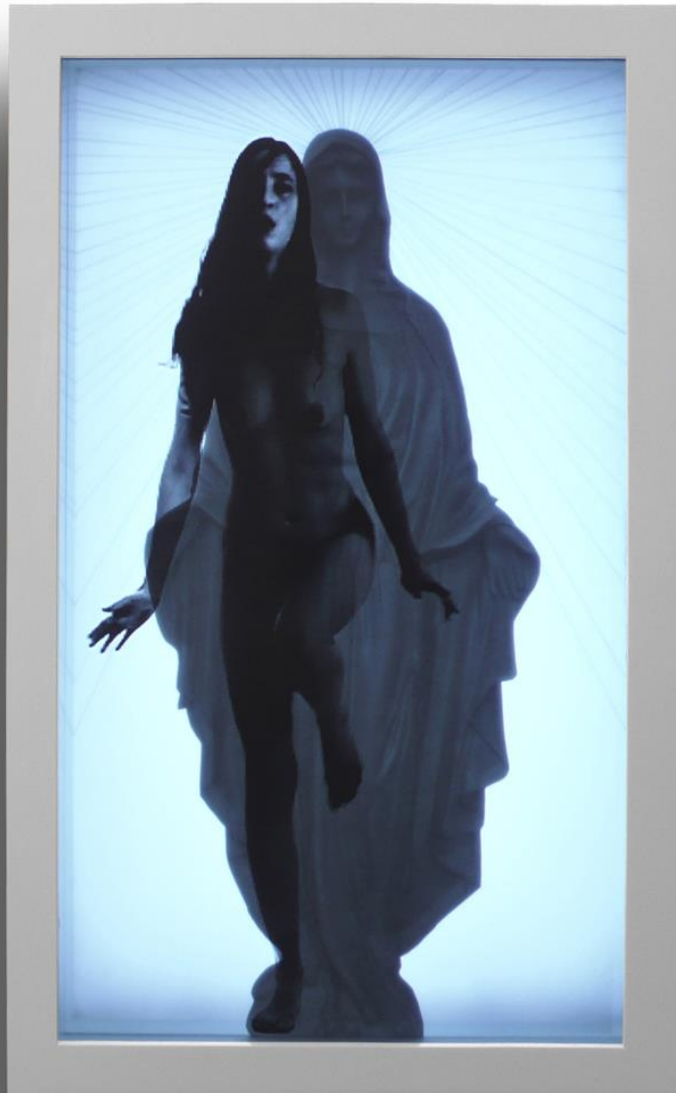
34 x 20 x 7, 56:51 min.



24. Marck, *Maria II*, 2010

LCD panel, wood, glass, video (color, silent)

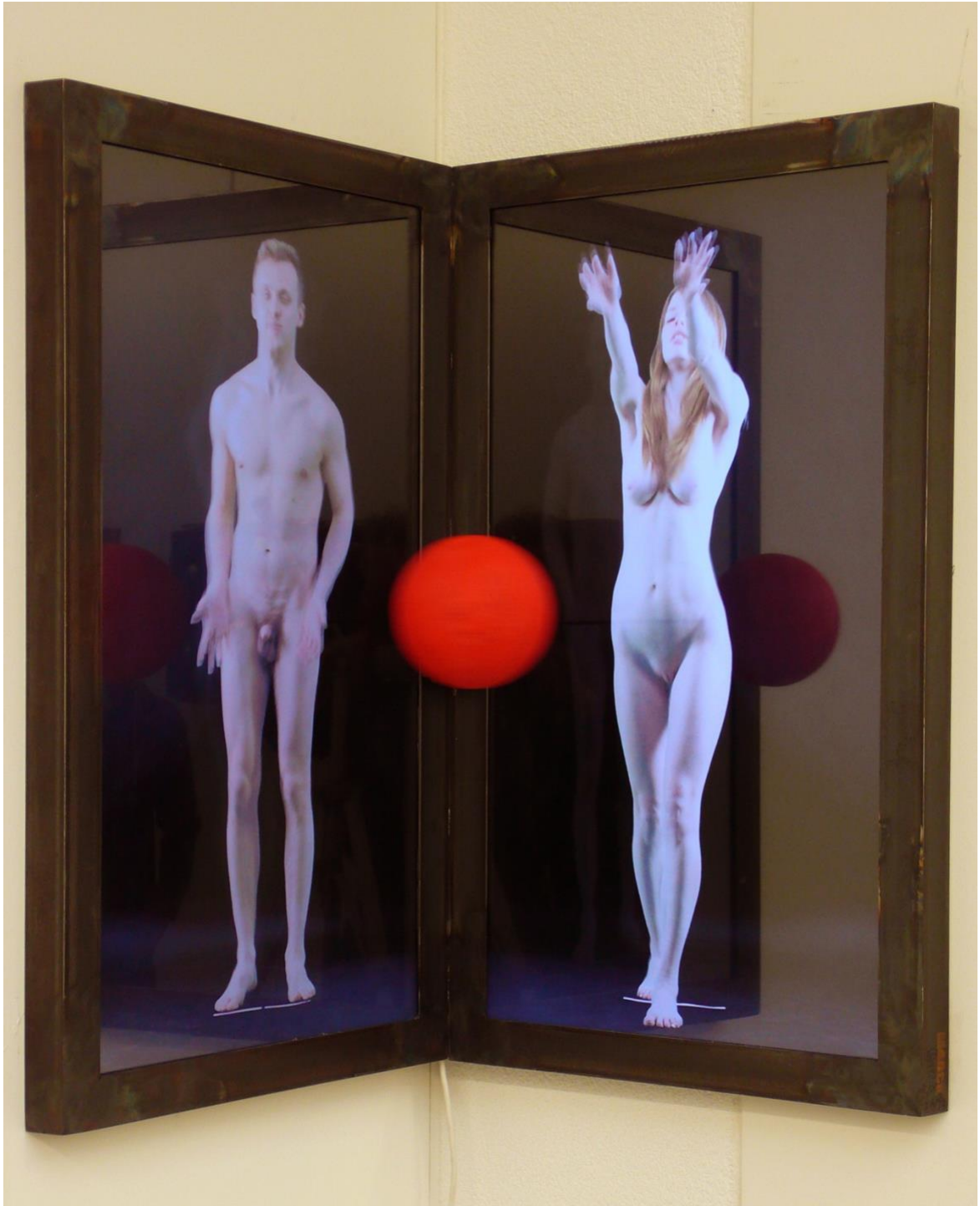
35 x 21 x 7 in., 36:49 min.



25. Marck, *Adam & Eva*, 2013

LCD screen, iron, ball, video (color, silent)

90 x 95 cm, 21:39 min.



APPENDIX

Interview with Marck

Conducted in German, translated to English by me.

Ecem: **Would you say your artworks look exactly the way you envisioned them before creating them, or do they change during the process? Are you faced with technical limitations that force you to change your vision?**

Marck: The video sculptures look 90% like I had imagined them. Remaining 10% is due to technical difficulties. For example, the depth or width needs to be adjusted to accurately match the screen and frame together.

Ecem: What makes you decide whether your works will be life-size or smaller than life-size? What is the effect of the size of the artwork on the audience?

Marck: The bigger the size, the bigger the effect of the protagonists. Life-size objects or objects even bigger than that are very imposing and of course appear more real and further attract the audience in them. By contrast, small objects can transport viewers into a small world.

Ecem: What are some interesting reactions to your video sculptures from the audience?

Marck: Again and again I learn that viewers recognize their personal history or life situation in my work. For instance, the looping or repetition of a condition of life reminds the viewer their own social constraints or conventions, which are common topics in my work.

Ecem: How do the subjects of the videos react when they see the final work?

Marck: The women in the videos are often actresses or models. For them, it is work, which often requires considerable physical duress. The water is cold and the repetition is exhausting. When they see themselves post-production, as video sculptures, they feel deeply connected to the character on the screen.

Ecem: In my thesis, I refer to you as an “illusionist” who gives three-dimensionality to his flat subjects. You find unique ways to create a portal between the audience and the video subject, blurring the line between the real and the virtual. Why is it important to you to extend the flatness of the video into the real world of the audience?

Marck: In my opinion, pure video art is too shallow and too limited. With three-dimensionality I can give the subjects their real limit, or respectively their depth. I try to transfer the movie into the real. Of course, it is not like in theater, but it helps me to convey situations in a more visceral way and get more emotional responses from the viewer.

Ecem: Do you think your artworks change the audience? Do your video sculptures make the audience perceive the world in a different way?

Marck: I would ultimately like to lead the audience to reflect and empathize with the subjects in front of them. I want them to reflect on themselves, their families, on dealing with fellow human beings and society. When emotions are triggered in the audience, I have reached my goal.

Ecem: Your subjects are trapped in claustrophobic boxes, pools, they are even on fire. Why are they so calm? Why don't they panic or scream for help?

Marck: The frame is the limit. Its boundaries represent societal conventions we accept on a daily basis. We apply self-censorship, censorship and self-restriction on ourselves, yet we do not scream for help. We do not constantly panic. We accept and remain hopeful for the better. All these accepted social conventions are utilized in my works, and as a result the subject does not panic. Why should they when we are not?

Ecem: Why don't most of your artworks have sound?

Marck: I have made objects with sound. This can increase the emotional feeling of tightness and distress. Often the noise consists of cries for help or monotonous sounds– in both cases, the noise is repetitive. Sound is a very demanding component of video sculptures and therefore I only use it very rarely and selectively.

Ecem: Let's imagine having two rooms in the exhibition space with two identical works. In one room, there is *Frauenkiste*, with the video playing on the screen. In the other room, there is the same sculpture, this time with the real Sandra trapped in it. Let's assume the artistry of the works is indistinguishable and they look the same. What if we told the audience that one of these works had a real woman and one of them had a virtual woman in them, would they respond the same? What if we told the audience looking at the video that it was a real woman, and the audience looking at the real Sandra that it was video? Would the reaction be identical?

Marck: I think the reaction would be similar. If the "real" Sandra sits inside the box for 24 hours as part of an art performance, the viewer can abstract

this from the reality of it. Essentially, it isn't something real, it is a performance, a work of art, even if the actress is a real person in front of them; the viewer always has that distance when looking at art.

If Sandra was really out of air to breathe in the box, we would want to call for help and have a real life reaction to it, but because whether or not she is real, we know that it is an artwork, so the frame of mind in which we contemplate it is the same whether we are looking at the video or the real version. So it doesn't really matter whether she is real or not- the effect is the same.

However, from an authorial point of view, the perception of the artist would be different. If she is perceived as real, then she is the artist doing a performance art, whereas if it is a video of her, then I am perceived as the artist, constructing video sculptures. With performance, the audience is certain that the woman here is the art(ist), not the video. Here the performance artist is questioned more. How did she get into that box? Is she going to be able to get out? With video sculpture, it is the techniques of placing the video in the box that is questioned.