

EXHIBITION GUIDE

H

Marshall McLuhan, 1971

00:05:24

In this short segment presenter Georges Adé critiques McLuhan's new book 'Culture is Our Business'.

Richard Hamilton, 1971

00:36:30

The artist talks with students from different academies at an exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels about his portraits of Francis Bacon and the language of art.

I

Marcel Broodthaers: Musée d'art du XVIIe siècle, 1972

00:05:06

Broodthaers' fictional museum, *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, was a long-term, continually evolving installation that sought to critique museum institutions by appropriating their language and disrupting them directly. The project started at the artist's own house, and was staged in 1969 at an alternative art space in Antwerp called A379089 founded by Cornelis. In this film the project manifests at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. By this point it had expanded to include over 300 objects that relate to the core theme of his fictitious institution; "*The eagle from the Oligocene to the Present*". Walking through the exhibition the artist discusses the modus through which an object becomes an artwork - or why it fails to.

Sonsbeek Buiten de Perken, 1971

00:46:00

Titled *Sonsbeek Beyond Its Bounds*, this film explores a contentious edition of the Dutch biennale which took artworks out of the museum and into public spaces across the country. It included large-scale works by widely celebrated artists, such as Robert Smithson and Claes Oldenburg. However, the biennale was vociferously contested as being elitist. On playful form, Cornelis opens the film with a graphic image of one man holding another in a choke hold. He ends the film with Daniel Buren discussing, somewhat paradoxically, his intentions when working in public space and the imposition such works make on the public; "*The advantage of art in the museum, even if it is horrible, is that it doesn't bother anyone... When art, without questioning it, breaks free from the limitations, we significantly overwhelm people who didn't expect this. It's an attack...*"

BASEMENT 1

J

De Langste Dag, 1986

06:15:48

Titled *The Longest Day*, this marathon recoding of a six-hour live broadcast of the exhibition *Initiatief '86*, in Ghent is shown at the CCA in full. The show was transmitted on the BRT network, the Belgian public TV channel, and beamed to homes across the country. The exhibition unfolded across several locations in Ghent as well as in private homes through the side project *Chambre des Amis*. It features interviews with curators, artists, and the public, closely questioning each on the nature of art, the reception of certain works, and the role of television. A central hub was used from which to patch through to various broadcast teams across the city, creating a live network through which the exhibition could be simultaneously experienced and critiqued.

EVENTS

SCREENING & TALK

Playback: Community Video In South London

Thurs 11 Jul

6:30-8:30pm

Connecting the spirit of *Jef Cornelis: TV Works 1960s-80s* to the local area of the CCA, this screening event will draw connections between Cornelis' direct and hands-on use of newly available portable video technology with the production of videos by activists and community groups based in and around South London in the 1970s.

Using examples from Goldsmiths' London Community Video Archive, we will trace the various uses of this new technology to document and effect social and political change; from safe play and housing to race riots and amateur dramatics. This will include videos made by Albany Video, Walworth and Aylesbury Community Arts Trust (WACAT), Two Boroughs Video and Second Wave Women's Group. These communities of film-makers were active in and around the neighbourhoods adjacent to New Cross, particularly Deptford and Walworth, both in the production and distribution of video works speaking to local issues and histories.

JEF CORNELIS

TV Works 1960s–80s

29 Jun – 11 Aug 2019

Over the course of a decade-long career, Belgian Director Jef Cornelis (1941–2018) has built a unique archive of exhibition histories through the format of the television documentary. Now-celebrated figures, such as Harald Szeemann, Stanley Brouwn, Daniel Buren, Sol Le Witt, James Lee Byars and Marcel Broodthaers feature in programmes that experimentally probe at the structural conditions of making art public. This exhibition has been devised to provide an overview of his work, specifically as it interacts with the field of art.

* Note to viewer: Cups of tea and sofas are provided to allow for longer viewing sessions of the films. Viewers are invited to navigate the films shown on monitors using the remote controls.

From small project space exhibitions to Documenta 4 & 5, his camera, and lines of questioning, manage to capture the contingent lateral elements of cultural production, often concealed from the public's view. Rifts, disputes, anxieties and rivalries are all laid bare through Cornelis' elegant and revealing exposition of the centrality of conflict in staging exhibitions and making art. These films are all the more compelling today given that they were commissioned and broadcast on BRT (now VRT), a Belgian public television station, highlighting the decline in both the experimentalism and quality of cultural programming on our screens today.

Documentary style essay films ironically covered events such as the *XXXIII Biennale Internazionale D'Arte Venezia* (1966) and *Paris Biennale* (1985) with an eye for the underlying structural conditions of their making, the complications and misfirings in their reception, and an unswerving attention to the ways in which audiences received these exhibitions. Encoded in many of his films are instances in which Cornelis uses sound or editing techniques to disrupt the declared intentions of the artist or curator in question; for instance in his film *Daniel Buren* (1971), in which a passing woman and dog totally disregard his street side work. This clashing of sound and speech with image are thus key moments in the films.

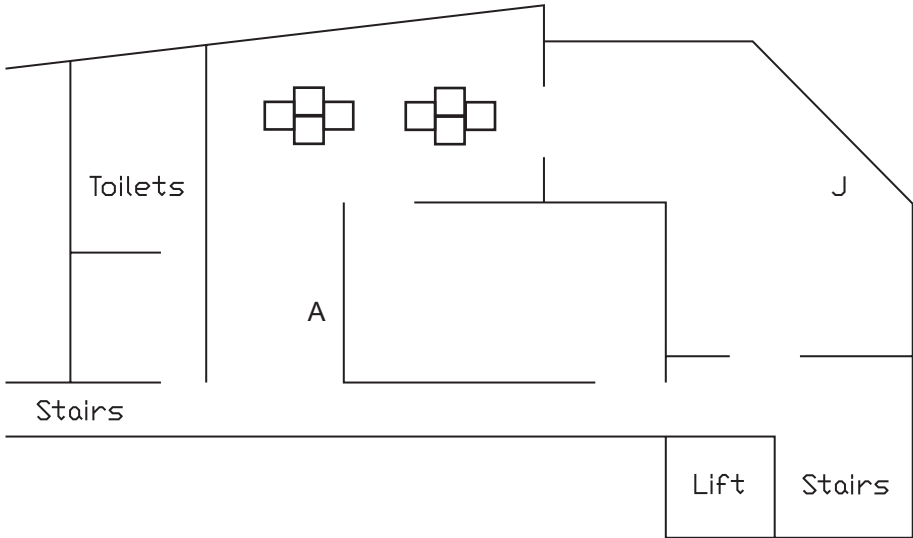
Cornelis' suspicious relationship to the field of art is palpable throughout – resulting in Cornelis ceasing to make films about art after 1972, and only picking up again in the 80s - and attested to in his being part of A 379089, along with Kasper König, an experimental art space in Antwerp that claimed to be an 'anti-gallery'. "It's obvious how I feel about the art world; remote, critical, ambiguous – to put it mildly."

Cornelis both instituted and expanded the potential for broadcasting art on TV. Ongoing TV shows such as *Zoeklicht*, gave remarkable mass media presence to avant-garde exhibitions and projects, and directly collaborated in them. Cornelis was thus instrumental in expanding the TV format to become a conceptual part of artists' work. The opening film for the exhibition is Stanley Brouwn's *6 Stappen* (1971). Brouwn was an elusive Dutch Surinamese conceptual artist (1935–2017), who remained anonymous throughout his career. The problem of documenting his dematerialised practice is approached through Cornelis giving the camera to Brouwn himself, who then created a televised art work that measures six steps taken through Brussels.

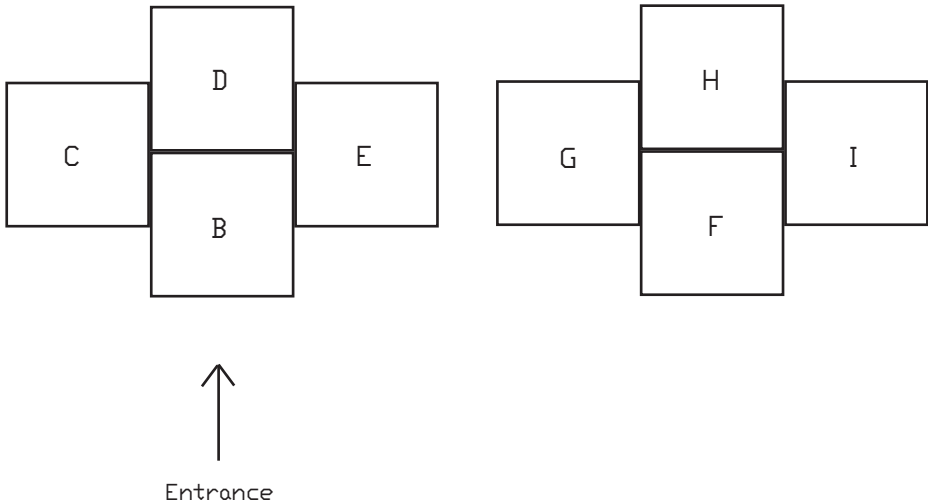
Two further films included in the exhibition delineate Cornelis' transgression of traditional modes of TV production. In *James Lee Byars' World Question Center* (1969) Byars' performance is broadcast live on TV, the medium becoming intrinsic to the work. Participants surrounded the artist in costume, or rang in on a telephone, and were asked the question; "Could you present us a question that you feel is pertinent with regard to the evolution of your own knowledge?" Most ambitiously, *De Langste Dag (the longest day)* (1986), was a six-hour live broadcast on the BRT network, and a central part of the exhibition *Initiatief '86*, which itself unfolded across several locations in Ghent, as well as in private homes through the side project *Chambre des Amis*. The format can be seen as a final episode of Cornelis' *Ijsbreker* series which staged live interviews and exchanges between interviewees on a number of cultural topics. Incredibly, Cornelis was given the same apparatus and equipment as used to cover major bicycle races, including a helicopter. Amongst footage of the multiple exhibitions, members of the public, politicians, curators, and artists are probed as to the way in which images operate, answering questions such as "can television do what art does?", creating an unparalleled communication platform and feedback loop between viewers and interviewees.

FLOORPLAN

Basement



Monitor Guide
(Press 'menu display' on the remote control to return to main menu).



LIST OF WORKS

BASEMENT

WESTON GALLERY

A
Stanley Brouwn, 6 Stappen 10x (MTL Gallery Brussel) + Karel Appel, 1971
00:05:05
This film was shot for *Zoeklicht op de culturele actualiteit (Spotlight on Current Cultural Events)*, a primetime cultural series on Belgian national TV. It features Surinamese / Dutch artist Stanley Brouwn. Cornelis takes on the problem of making a film with an artist who operated anonymously, and who made dematerialised conceptual works, by handing the camera to Brouwn himself, who then filmed a series of steps taken on the street in keeping with his investigations of time and measurement. This is followed by documentation of an exhibition by Karel Appel.

B
James Lee Byars: World Question Center, 1969
01:03:28
Byars' performative work, the *World Question Center*, consisted of an attempt to collect 100 questions from 100 of the 'most brilliant minds of the time'. It was broadcast live on November 28th 1968 on BRT, the Belgian public television channel. A circle of participants, including Marcel Broodthaers, surround Byars wearing costumes and pose questions to him. Interlocutors could also contact Byars with questions over the phone during the broadcast. These voices include Joseph Beuys, John Cage, Walther Hopps, Marshall McLuhan, and Cedric Price. Their questions are met with further questions from Byars, a technique borrowed from Zen philosophy that aspires to sustain doubt.

C
O.M.A Rem Koolhaas, 1985
01:16:5
An interview with architect Rem Koolhaas at his architectural firm OMA ('Office for Metropolitan Architecture') in Rotterdam. Cornelis portrays the powerful architect spotlit and alone, centre-stage yet vulnerable.

D
Biennale van Parijs, 1985
01.07.00
A sweeping film that takes in various interviews with the curators of the Paris Biennale (Georges Boudaille, Kasper König, Alanna Heis) and its artists such as Keith Haring. Cornelis leaves the camera rolling to capture telling moments of conflict and rivalry within the exhibition's installation, whilst also reflecting on the role of art and TV.

E
Documenta 4, 1968 00:53:19
This edition of Documenta was part of the unrest that characterised the 1960s, with artists forming break-away groups in protest against curatorial decisions. Indeed the art world itself was experiencing a seismic shift in the terms of art. Cornelis and interviewer Karel Geirlandt, a long-term collaborator, interview the curators and exhibiting artists, ironically exploring the rival factions' claims from the position of the bewildered outsider.

F
Daniel Buren (Palais Royal), 1986
00:18:16
This film explores Buren's much-debated installation *Le Deux Plateaux*, a permanent artwork for the historical Palais Royal. The work was subject of empassioned national discussion and subject to law suits. Many saw it as an absurd imposition on the beauty of the Palais' architecture - in 1986 alone *Les Deux Plateaux* was the subject of 225 articles and 45 different reviews.

Daniel Buren, 1971
00:05:40
George Adé interviews the artist on the occasion of his solo show at Wide White Space Gallery in Antwerp, and playfully undermines his intentions regarding the public impact of his striped works placed on the gallery's facade.

G
XXXIII Biennale Internazionale D'Arte Venezia, 1966
00:24:00
A caustic look at the opening of the Biennale, which questions the selection process for the prestigious Golden Lion award, the pomp of its presentation, and the modish monied crowd that attended the opening days.

Documenta 5, 1972
00:53:19
Often regarded as the first 'spectacular' exhibition, this edition of Documenta was curated by Harald Szeeman. who cemented the figure of the curator as the 'author' of the exhibition. Cornelis covers the event in a minimal manner, with few interviews and guiding reportage, so as to create the space for the viewer of the TV programme to become the spectator involved in percieving the exhibition itself. Cornelis thus draws attention to the medium through which the viewer experiences Documenta, and liberates them from the imposition of meaning proposed by the artists and curator, and their mythologisation.