

INSTALLATION FORMATS

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Published here, in the libraryline series of booklets, is the English translation of the essay *Formati installativi* by Valentina Valentini, curator of the exhibition *Videoarte in Italia. Il video rende felici* (Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni and Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, 12 April–4 September 2022). The original Italian text was published in the exhibition catalogue of the same name, edited by Cosetta Saba and Valentina Valentini for the Treccani publishing house (Rome, 2022).

The text* traces a historical path that at the same time reflects on the works that mark the course of the exhibition *Videoarte in Italia. Il video rende felici*. In particular, it discusses how the installation format has taken shape in Italy starting from experiments in kinetic and programmed art, from embryonic forms of expanded cinema, from performative events transmitted through closed-circuit devices and from video-sculptures, arriving at video and interactive installations and at the multiple formats of the new millennium. This field of inquiry – while sharing traits with that of site-specific installations inasmuch as its object “becomes a work of art only through the process of its putting-into-operation”¹ – presents different characteristics, because it contradictorily mixes instances of the arts of space and of the arts of time: the plastic dimension proper to sculpture, the temporal dimension of the moving image and the ephemeral dimension of the ephemeral event.²

According to Anne-Marie Duguet, video installation “situates itself beyond the ‘territorial’ limits of every art in order to call into question the limits of art itself, crossing body and land art, performance art, experimental cinema, and assigning the spectator a fundamental role in activating the work.”³ In fact, the multiplication of viewpoints calls the perspectival-contemplative dimension into crisis, so that the function of looking is joined to that of moving through space, and both integrate into the figure of the visitor-spectator, as Philippe Dubois⁴ proposes. In Italy, theoretical reflection on this format begins to be addressed with specific studies between the late 1990s and the new millennium⁵.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The concept of environment emphasizes space as a device that generates the event and is the common denominator of experiences belonging both to the performing arts and to the visual arts. In 1968, with extraordinary timeliness, the publisher De Donato released a slim volume, *La cavità*

teatrale, a collection of manifesto-essays by Richard Schechner that shaped the aesthetics of the New Theatre both in the United States and in Italy. The essay *6 Axioms for Environmental Theatre*⁶ distilled in six points a new dramaturgy that placed the role of space at the forefront: the *environment*, whether created or found, becomes the physical and conceptual dimension for all the experimentation of the period, from happenings to intermedia⁷, and on to Arte Povera. In Italy, from the 1960s onward, an intense and vital movement of interaction among the arts developed. Paola Nicolin writes: "From Fontana's Spatialism to Bruno Munari's Concrete Art, artistic research produces re-elaborations that on the one hand tend toward extending the gesture into the environment, toward the happening and the importance of the idea as an expressive hallmark, and on the other hand toward reworking the concept of time and space in the work."⁸ The "habitable" environments of kinetic and programmed art, in which the visitor-spectator finds himself co-opted into a dispersed space where there is no longer an object to grasp "at a glance,"⁹ mark an ideal starting point for the path of installation formats we are configuring. The program of Gruppo T proposed an "immersive and interactive" art: in Getulio Alviani's *Interpretazione speculare* (1965–1967 / mirror interpretation), Agostino Bonalumi's *Blu abitabile* (1967 / habitable blue) and Luciano Fabro's *In-cubo* (1966 / in-cube) space was conceived as a field of action, not of representation¹⁰; Gianni Colombo's *Spazio elastico* (1967 / elastic space) "consists of a regular three-dimensional grid of elastic threads set into an irregular, asymmetrical movement by means of electric motors [...]. The environment is usually dark; the illumination of the threads obtained with a Wood lamp is particularly effective for reading the grid,"¹¹ while Davide Boriani and Gabriele De Vecchi's *Camera distorta abitabile* (1970 / habitable distorted room) is a furnished environment with doors, windows, furniture, a television set and a copy of Giorgione's Venus of Dresden, distorted according to a principle of three-dimensional anamorphosis. To these practices also connects Marinella Pirelli's *Film*

ambiente (1968 / environmental film). The environment the visitor-spectator is invited to traverse is dynamic, composed of a luminous flow of moving images projected into space. Moreover, “through the system of photosensitive cells designed by Livio Castiglioni, the images generated on the screens are directly recorded and translated into sound, creating an immediate correspondence between the visual chromatic scale and the sound scale.”¹²

Common traits between these “habitable” environments and the installations that in subsequent years use electronic and digital devices can be found in spatial configurations that are modifiable and in continual transformation (then animated both electro-mechanically and manually); in questioning the relationship between inside and outside; in the mobility of viewpoints; in the processual and experiential dimension; in the perceptual-sensory and playful involvement of the visitor; and, not least, in the transformation of artistic practice into collective work, where the artist is part of a team of technicians and scientists (the studio dimension).

EXPANDED CINEMA AND PERFORMATIVE ACTIONS

The 1960s, as noted, are characterized by a terrain of transdisciplinary experimentation. Fernanda Pivano, in a 1969 text dealing with neo-avant-garde inclinations in Italy, includes the work of Pirelli and Umberto Bignardi within the tendency of expanded cinema, associating it with contemporary North American intermedia experiences: “Outside cinema, among the attempts that lie between expanded cinema and visual research, one can recall Nanni Balestrini and Mario Ricci’s theatrical realization *Illuminazione* and Marinella Pirelli’s research with a continuously-looped film projection projected onto transparent, refracting prisms. It seems that in expanded cinema filmmakers differ, more than by political approach, by a technical approach, with some moving toward pure visual research and others toward the attempt to create an environment that involves the spectator

in the situation created by the artist.”¹³ In this perspective, Bignardi’s experimentation fits into a practice of interferences among visual arts, music, cinema and photography that foresees the possibility for users to “look, touch, feel and walk inside it as and when they want [...] a way to reinvent the cinematic image and also to negate it.”¹⁴ Similarly, Pirelli’s *Film ambiente* proposed overcoming the predetermined frontality of the screen-spectator relationship, reinventing the cinema format and audiovisually invading the space transformed by the visitor’s path.

The inter-code practices of those years also led to the use of spaces different from those conventionally dedicated to specific disciplinary fields (cinema, theatre, art gallery, etc.): the Piper in Turin – a nightclub – hosted interventions by theatre directors such as Carlo Quartucci as well as by visual artists such as Michelangelo Pistoletto; at the same time, strobe lighting from clubs migrated into theatres. The common impulse nourishing these artists’ experimental practices was the neo-avant-garde desire to restart from a “degree zero.” The dominant constructive device of different practices was space, an energetic field in which all elements interact starting from the visitor-spectator. In this context, where a political need to erode the artistic product as merchandise with exchange value operates deeply, an activity takes hold that tends toward the dematerialization of artistic practice through direct action, bringing together space and technologies, presence and artistic action – exchanging properties and mutually strengthening them.¹⁵

Ginnastica mentale (mental gymnastics) is the title of an exhibition Fabio Sargentini presented in 1968 at L’Attico in Rome, transforming the gallery into a gym where individual and collective bodily practices took place. Among the artists present, Claudio Cintoli knotted ropes into braids, balls and skeins, then arranged them on the floor for the duration of the show. That same year, *Teatro delle mostre* was an event during which the activity of a gallery such as La Tartaruga in Rome “from a place to purchase works gradually becomes a place for the presentation of ephemeral and thus unsellable

interventions, in line with the anti-capitalist protests promoted by the contemporaneous *Contestazione*.”¹⁶

La spia ottica (1968 / the optical peephole) by Giosetta Fioroni, which inaugurated *Teatro delle mostre*, and *Opprimente* (1968 / oppressive) by Franco Angeli are two works that align well with this path. In the first environment the visitor finds a door with a hole at the center and a sign that reads: “Giosetta Fioroni’s optical peephole, that is: my bedroom, action by Giuliana Calandra.” Looking through the hole, due to the peculiar lenses that increase perceived distance and shrink the view as if seen from above, the spectator sees the artist’s bedroom, brought into the gallery for the occasion, and a woman (the actress Giuliana Calandra) who performs everyday gestures such as listening to the radio, combing her hair, reading and dressing. Franco Angeli’s environment¹⁷ instead presents a lowered ceiling with a layer of expanded polystyrene containing microphones that capture ambient sound, a working movie camera and a blinding lighting system – elements that produce a sensation of oppression¹⁸. In these environments, where a visual and at the same time performative device is at work, unlike what happens in the habitable environments of kinetic artists, the spectator’s role does not become that of a visitor.

ACTIONS-ENVIRONMENTS AND CLOSED CIRCUIT

In this context, which tends toward the dematerialization of artistic production in the performative dimension, the electronic device of shooting and projection is introduced with different functions: for recording live actions in the presence of spectators (as in Luciano Giaccari’s repertoire¹⁹) and for making video-performances in the absence of spectators (as in the repertoire of art/tapes/22). In this second case the artists themselves experiment in front of a fixed camera with the mechanism of simultaneous feedback, that is, the ability to see themselves doing something at the exact moment they are doing it. In the early 1970s, the idea of video as a

transparent medium was widespread, conveying the artist's action directly, without editing (something the technologies available up to that point made almost impossible). Celebrating this presumed transparency reinforced authors' tendency, both in experimental film and in video, to soften the technological impact of the new device. Real time, which video shared with the performing arts, was far from cinema's reproducibility, magnified improvisation and the event, and became functional for conveying "in the most adequate and anonymous way this new expressive means, which is the artist's 'action,' without transforming it into a work of direction."²⁰ In this sense, the processual dimension, which suited the non-replicable character of performance art, prevailed over the documentary and memorial one: "Video is not used to 'document'," writes Francesca Gallo, "but becomes part of a complex interaction with the public, as will later happen with installations proper, which in more than one respect develop some of these early cues. [...] Throughout the 1970s closed-circuit television is very vital; artists use it together with actions that foresee different observation points; the presence of the monitor creates singular environments, which in many respects can be considered forerunners of video installations."²¹

The relationship between the video recording device and actions performed live by artists, then transmitted on closed-circuit monitors, represents another node to keep in mind, as Gallo notes, referring to *Two and two. Earth air fire water* (1976), a concert-video-performance by Christina Kubisch and Fabrizio Plessi, in which the "complex stage machine pivots on the diaphragm constituted by a wooden partition that allows what happens behind it to be barely glimpsed; above the partition a row of ten televisions transmits distorted or close-up details of the action, so that the images are not immediately legible."²² It should be observed that in these closed-circuit actions-environments, as in performance art, it is the artists themselves who perform what they have designed.²³

The box of life (1978) by Federica Marangoni is the result of

a 16 mm shooting of an action in which the artist carried a trunk on her shoulders (like an itinerant vendor) containing polyester parts of a female body and wax casts, later disintegrated with a blowtorch.²⁴ *Il tempo consuma* (1978 / time consumes) by Michele Sambin, created in the context of the production center of the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice, integrates the performative dimension with the installation one: it is a live action in which three monitors – one of which transmits the artist's action in real time – configure the space. Sambin is filmed frontally by a camera that frames him sitting in front of the monitors. This image is retransmitted with a slight delay, while the artist repeats, rocking, the sentence: "Time consumes images, time consumes sounds." Thanks to the videoloop device – his invention of technological craftsmanship – the performative and installation work integrates the real time of shooting and transmission with "a stratification of images and sounds that gradually become increasingly dense and indistinguishable, demonstrating what is stated."²⁵

In these contaminations among media, video not only participates but performs the function of a constructive device: it creates the event, here and now; it does not document it in order to consign it to historical memory.

Real-time recording/transmission, the defining trait of the *nouvelle image*, also returns in the first video installations produced within the experimental context created in Florence by art/tapes/22. *D'un cadre à l'autre: 5 images/fragments d'un modèle retransmis directement à l'échelle 1/1* by Daniel Buren is composed with a shooting set of five cameras and as many monitors of different formats, aligned on a table: the cameras record in real time and transmit on the monitors images of the wall behind the table, which Buren had previously covered with striped white-and-blue wallpaper, then cutting out portions equivalent in measure and format to those of the five monitors (hence the subtitle *Recouvrant/Effaçant*, highlighting the act of covering and uncovering the wall). Bill Viola's *Il vapore* (the steam) instead integrates two temporal planes: that of the prerecorded

video action – “a solitary performance in a space closed to the public” in which the artist fills a container by pouring water from his mouth – and the present of the pot in which eucalyptus leaves are boiled, and of the visitor; both are shot in real time by a camera and projected on the monitor placed at the back.²⁶

The object-like dimension of these early video installations – replicable in further installations, collectible and thus marketable – marks a move beyond the aesthetics of the immaterial work and the consolidation of formats that integrate real time within a plastic-installation construction. This also appears in works of the new millennium, such as Donato Piccolo’s *Video machine mobile* (2022), a kinetic sculpture formed by a monitor with appendages on the sides, like legs, which interacts with the surrounding space by exploiting artificial intelligence, and Quayola’s *Transient-Impermanent Paintings* (2020), which stages the impermanence of digital painting on screen.

VIDEO SCULPTURES / INSTALLATION-BASED STAGE WORKS

A use of the electronic device modeled on the plastic and art-historical tradition, which considers the monitor an integral part of a material structure conceived as a sculptural object, was experimented in Italy by artists such as Fabrizio Plessi. His *La stanza del mare* (1990 / the room of the sea) consists of an iron structure with twelve monitors, while *Armadi* (1990 / wardrobes) aligns forty rusty iron boxes with eight monitors and colored fabrics. The term “video sculpture” defines these types of works that camouflage the monitor by cladding it with materials proper to sculptural tradition such as wood, iron and marble. In Maurizio Camerani’s works the video image becomes tautological, as in *Corpi freddi* (1986 / cold bodies), a video sculpture in the form of a tree whose trunk is a cement-and-iron structure and whose foliage consists of two wooden cases each containing a monitor. The relationship established between natural

materials and the electronic image sets solid against fluid, in an attempt to arrest the electronic flow that becomes ever faster and harder to grasp. Giacomo Verde's video sculpture *Video-totem est-estetica antica-t-astro-fica* (1986), produced by the Centro Video Arte of Ferrara, makes natural elements (water, moss, earth) interact – with irony, without opposing them – with the electronic image, in a monitor supported by a pedestal covered with earth and moss, within whose double screen – pierced and colored – water circulates. This “object-like” declension of video also appears in the exhibition *Camere incantate* (enchanted rooms)²⁷, curated by Vittorio Fagone in 1980, where formats such as video sculptures and video installations are included, signaling an achieved constructive unity. With regard to installations, in the catalogue introduction Vittorio Fagone writes: “it must be noted that throughout the world the images of communication as hybrid images are tested in unprecedented and meaningful relationships inside complex spaces. I am speaking of installations where the spectator is called upon to live before looking, to recognize a complex sign, a duration that does not fear declaring itself ephemeral.”²⁸ This exhibition was the first in Italy to investigate relationships (in the international field) among art, photography, video and cinema in the direction of an expansion of the image, confirming the vital border-crossings that nourished video and, at the same time, affirming formats in the process of consolidation. Among these “vital border-crossings” Fagone did not include theatre, where we nonetheless find installation formats of various kinds: the screen form returns in *La cavalcata sul lago di Costanza* (1975 / the ride across Lake Constance)²⁹, staged by Simone Carella, in which the scenic space – delimited by a platform separating it from the spectator's space – was treated through lighting like a cinematic screen, with close-ups, long shots and shot/reverse-shot. Real time, which assimilates the image produced by video recording to the theatrical event, is the constructive device of *Prologo a diario segreto contraffatto* (1985 / prologue to a forged and secret diary) and *La camera astratta* (1987 / the

abstract room), created by Studio Azzurro and Giorgio Barberio Corsetti: in these performances the aligned monitors do not transmit prerecorded images but the actions actors perform on stage and backstage, recorded and transmitted in real time³⁰. The installation format also models Teatrino Clandestino's *Madre assassina* (2004 / murdering mother), in which the stage space appears as a cube inside which sequences of the show's actions are projected onto a thick black scrim, each with its different setting. Beyond the spatial configuration of the scene, in these performances the electronic device creates an introspective space-time, a chamber of thought in which vision replaces action.

VIDEO INSTALLATIONS AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The format of video installations identifies a use of the monitor in relation to space, unlike video sculpture, which encapsulates it in a material structure, almost as if to rein in and contain its nature as flow, as real time, as a loop without beginning or end. Studio Azzurro's video installations *Il nuotatore (va troppo spesso ad Heidelberg)* (1984 / the swimmer / too many trips to Heidelberg) and *Vedute (quel tale non sta mai fermo)* (1985 / views / that fellow never stands still) offer a perspective that goes beyond the dichotomies natural-artificial, subject-object, physical-mental, real-imaginary, inside-outside, transforming "dis-course" into a movement of reversible forces.

In the 1990s, Milo Adami observes, "the introduction onto the market of the first LCD (Liquid-Crystal-Display) screens and video projectors, lighter and brighter than the previous three-colour CRT (Cathode-Ray-Tube) models, makes it extremely easy to project video in any kind of exhibition space, onto a large screen or directly onto a wall."³¹ Images, freed from monitor frames, expand everywhere: they enlarge, shrink, are projected onto one or more screens of varying size and tend to become immersive, a quality proper to environments in the digital age.

Dopo l'omicidio, Genova 2001 (2001-2011 / after the murder, Genoa 2001) by Giacomo Verde is a video installation in which two slow-motion projections transmit sequences of images recorded after the killing of Carlo Giuliani during the G8 onto two screens – on one of them in reverse. Single-channel and multi-channel projections become, in the new millennium, a very widespread installation format: dazzling screens that emit light, coloured matter (as in James Turrell's *Skyspaces*), that draw shadows, overturning the function of the cinematic screen as projection of image sequences in a narrative sense.³²

No more sleep no more (2017) by Danilo Correale and *Transient-Impermanent Paintings* (2020) by Quayola adopt the screen form. The first involves the visitor-spectator who, lying on a chaise longue, listens through headphones to the words of a philosopher, an anthropologist, a historian, a doctor, a sociologist and a feminist scholar on the theme of the sleep-wake relationship – free time (sleep, night) and work (day, wakefulness) – and “the image and sound accompany them on a meditative and sensory journey.”³³ In Quayola's work (an installation variant of the concert for two motorised pianos and video projections), the spatial dimension of installations implodes and explodes on screens, producing a fibrillation of visual and sonic matter that fosters haptic perception. The artist's research into historical trends of painting – in this case Impressionism – can be read as an operation of “remediation”: through the algorithm that produces the digital painting, painting reinvents itself from canvas to screen. A peculiarity of the installation format that has become established with digital technologies is interactivity, which involves artists such as Giacomo Verde, Mario Canali³⁴, Studio Azzurro and others. Let us linger on the interactive format of the installations that Studio Azzurro defines as “sensitive environments,” built with software that reacts through natural interfaces to visitors' actions, because they offer a complex experience of the relationship among space, visual and sonic components, and visitors. In *Le zattere dei sentimenti* (2002 / the rafts of feelings), “By experiencing the surface of the

table with their touch, the visitor can caress and/or strike the images of hands and fingers projected on video. Depending on the force with which the gesture is made and its repetition, the spectator can help and/or deny the shipwrecked the possibility of saving themselves by climbing onto the raft.”³⁵ The peculiarity of these environments lies in the role attributed to the visitor, which is both playful and individual – in that their action can make the mechanism that activates the work-event function – and ritual, that is, a collectively shared experience. Even more relevant in this work is a drive that supports Studio Azzurro’s entire production: the possibility of regenerating the forms of aesthetic reception. To defend oneself from the undifferentiated flow of vision and to bring an image to light, there must be a subject who performs an action, who decides to save on the raft whoever is drowning. This assumption of responsibility is the strong call that comes not only from the sensitive environments: in *Il giardino delle cose* (1992 / the garden of things), the shape of a bowl appeared on the monitor thanks to the warmth of the hands, thus through contact, through manipulation of matter, by virtue of an action.

BEYOND THE CINEMA ON DISPLAY

Raymond Bellour’s essay *Un autre cinéma* (2000)³⁶ takes as its sample the installation works by international artists shown at the 1999 Venice Biennale (among them Pipilotti Rist, Bill Viola, Shirin Neshat, Stan Douglas, Douglas Gordon, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Sam Taylor-Wood) and signals a significant turning point: cinema on display is cinema that moves from the darkness of the movie theatre, where one sits and watches a frontal projection, into a museum or gallery room: the (new) “black box”. The relationship among moving image, space and spectator, experimented with video installations, is remolded on cinema’s writing figures and on its archive of images: cinema as a subject analyzed, dismantled, re-proposed, subjected to remake.³⁷

This phenomenon signals cinema taking on the spaces proper to visual art, to the point of affirming a new exhibition model. What the movie theatre and the museum room share, more broadly after the 1990s, is the use of projection on screen. Unlike cinema, installations dispose one or more screens that project images, chromatic and luminous matter into space – a space that, from static and rigid, appears fluid and elastic – in which the projection device becomes a field of energies, as in Daniele Puppi's *Fatica n. 6*, about which the artist states: "I do not intend to occupy space, but to explore it in order to make it explode."³⁸

This relationship of video with cinema and, conversely, of cinema with the installation format – which also produces a recovery of the tradition of experimental cinema, contiguous in the early 1970s to video practice³⁹ – in Italy can be found, among others, in Rosa Barba's production, in a perspective different from "cinema on display". In her installations cinema becomes a source from which to take fragments to recompose them in a different montage: the projector and screen she installs inside a gallery or museum do not reactivate an "obsolete"⁴⁰ practice, but are architectural elements purified of images. In *Western round table* (2007) the projection is an architecture of light, since the film reels are unexposed. The visitor, besides being perceptually invested in an acoustic and plastic space, has – according to the artist – the responsibility to recompose what has been dismantled, to place themselves in a historical time between progress and obsolescence.

A fascination with an outmoded time, with worlds from a recent past seen as archaeology, emerges as a distinctive trait in some works of the new millennium, for example MASBEDO's *Blind mirrors* (2019), which lead us into the ballroom of Palazzo Gangi in Palermo where Luchino Visconti shot the ball scenes of *The Leopard* (1963).

The relationship we are investigating – space-visitor/spectator-moving image-sound – as we have seen, does not primarily derive from cinema, but from the "vital border-crossings of the arts," among which cinema in its experimental

practice as well. Once the uniqueness of frontal projection is dismantled, the moving image adapts to different exhibition modes, inventing each time its own space and projection format. Along this path we have verified that what is conventionally understood as a polarity – event and technical reproducibility – in the field of video installation constitutes a binomial: the performative dimension, whether triggered by the visitor or predisposed as an action performed in front of the camera by the artist, is an intrinsic characteristic of installation formats. In the path traced we have found that such formats work with the real time of an instantaneous production that is neither repeatable nor reproducible, where the image is a field of energy and where the visitor-spectator is made responsible.⁴¹

NOTES

- * All original Italian quotations (taken from Italian texts) have been translated into English. Where available, English titles of the cited video works are used; otherwise an information-only translation of the original titles is provided in parentheses.
1. See T. Scholte, *Introduction*, in *Inside installation. Theory and practice in the care of complex artworks*, ed. by Ead., G. Wharton, Amsterdam 2011, p. 11, cited in S. Zuliani, *Senza cornice. Spazi e tempi dell'installazione*, Rome 2015, p. 67. See also C. Bishop, *Installation art: a critical history*, New York 2005.
 2. See V. Valentini, *Corridoi, labirinti, soglie: come mettere in gioco lo spettatore*, in *Dal vivo: Jem Cohen, Gary Hill, Bruce Nauman, Nam June Paik, Monica Pellizzari, Studio Azzurro*, ed. by V. Valentini, exhibition catalogue (Taormina), Rome 1996; and Ead., *Ipotesi per una pre-storia delle installazioni video*, "Sciami | Ricerche", 6, 2019, pp. 37–52.
 3. A.-M. Duguët, *Dispositifs* [1988], Italian trans. *Dispositivi*, in *Le Storie del video*, ed. by V. Valentini, Rome 2003, p. 261. See also C. Van Assche, *New media installations*, catalogue raisonné, Paris 2006.
 4. See P. Dubois, *La questione della 'forma-schermo' nelle installazioni*, in *Medium senza medium. Amnesia e cannibalizzazione: il video dopo gli anni Novanta*, ed. by V. Valentini, C.G. Saba, Rome 2015, pp. 232–249. See also G. Bruno, *Atlante delle emozioni. In viaggio tra arte, architettura e cinema*, Milan 2006. Seeing and traveling are inseparable, and Giuliana Bruno demonstrates this by means of a montage that plays with the etymology of key words: *voyeur* and *voyageur*, sight and site, motion and emotion.
 5. We cite some studies, without any claim to exhaustiveness: *Monumenti effimeri. Storia e conservazione delle installazioni* by B. Ferriani and M. Pugliese (Milan 2009), which proposes a historical itinerary that, moving from Dada and Surrealist exhibitions, arrives – through Lucio Fontana's spatial environments, kinetic research and Kaprow's environments – at the exhibition/installation practices of the neo-avant-gardes; S. Cargioli, *Sensi che vedono. Introduzione all'arte della video-installazione*, Pisa 2002; A. Balzola, A.M. Monteverdi, *Le arti multimediali digitali. Storia, tecniche, linguaggi, etiche ed estetiche del nuovo millennio*, Milan 2004; *Arte tra azione e contemplazione. L'interattività nelle ricerche artistiche*, ed. by S. Vassallo, A. Di Brino, Pisa 2004; R. Grisolia, *Milieux ambients. De l'image à l'espace, de l'espace à l'image*, Aix-en-Provence 2015.
 6. See R. Schechner, *6 Axioms for environmental theatre* [1968], Italian trans. *Sei assiomi per l'environmental theatre*, in Id., *La cavità teatrale*, Bari 1968, pp. 21–72, esp. p. 35.
 7. Intermediality is not a simple sum of arts but an organic and poetic relationship between languages; it is not mixed media, that is, an artistic object in which each specific language remains distinct and recognizable, but a border territory that becomes a unique and new landscape. Dick Higgins, who coined the term, in *Horizons2* writes in the

glossary a possible definition of intermediality: "intermedia: when two or more discrete media are conceptually fused, they become intermedia. They differ from mixed media [...] in being inseparable in the essence of an artwork." See D. Higgins, *Horizons. The poetics and theory of the intermedia*, Carbondale 1984, p. 138. As regards Italy, see R. Barilli, *Informale, oggetto, comportamento. Volume 1 La ricerca artistica negli anni '50 e '60 e Id., Informale, oggetto, comportamento. Volume 2 La ricerca artistica negli anni '70*, Milan 1975 (2006); *L'Attico 1957–1987. 30 years of painting, sculpture, music, dance, performance, video*, ed. by F. Sargentini, R. Lambarelli, L. Masini, exhibition catalogue, Milan–Rome 1987.

8. P. Nicolin, *Qui mostra a voi spazio. L'impatto delle esposizioni nella definizione dell'idea di ambiente nell'arte italiana degli anni Sessanta*, in *Arte-mondo. Storia dell'arte, storie dell'arte*, ed. by E. De Cecco, Milan 2010, p. 81.
9. Nicolin writes (*ibid.*, p. 101): "The exhibition *Lo spazio dell'immagine* (1967, Foligno) – in which these environments were realized – clearly indicates how much the 1960s were devoted to the crusade of the environment, which through key figures such as Lucio Fontana and Bruno Munari is transmitted to subsequent generations in all its complexity and richness, between the notion of the artwork as continuous space beyond the canvas and of the object as a multiply-able idea."
10. M. Previti, *Opere moltiplicate, opera aperta. Serialità e anonimato nelle ricerche cinevisuali degli anni Sessanta*, "Venezia Arti", new series 3, 30, 2021, pp. 97–113.
11. *Gli ambienti del Gruppo T. Le origini dell'arte interattiva*, ed. by M. Margozi, L. Meloni, F. Lardera, exhibition catalogue (Rome), Cinisello Balsamo 2005. See also L. Meloni, D. Boriani. *Arte cinetica, programmata, interattiva*, Imola 2018.
12. L. Aspesi, *Film esperienza. Le sperimentazioni cinematografiche tra il 1961 e il 1974*, in *Luce Movimento. Il cinema sperimentale di Marinella Pirelli*, ed. by Ead., I. Ratti, Milan 2019, p. 45.
13. *Manovelle fuori canale. I filmatori italiani da underground a indipendenti a collettivi*, in *Luce Movimento...*, ed. by L. Aspesi, I. Ratti, cited, p. 100 (first publication in "Domus", 477, 1969).
14. U. Bignardi in *Umberto Bignardi. Opere dal 1958 al 1993*, ed. by M. Calvesi, L. Cherubini, exhibition catalogue, Rome 1994, p. 22; also in V. Valentini, *Teatro–letteratura–musica: manifesti, querelle, intermedia 1963–1967*, in *Nuovo teatro made in Italy. 1963–2013*, ed. by V. Valentini, Rome 2015, pp. 43–44. Bignardi participated in independent cinema initiatives and collaborated with groups of the New Theatre. At the end of 1968 he distanced himself from the places and circuits of the art system and began collaborating with big industry (Olivetti, then IBM), in a design-production path of innovative multimedia systems that combine art and technology, design and scenography, and composite media languages. Among his works, *Prismobile* (1964), *Rotor* (1967)

and *Implicor* (1969–1970) are defined by the artist himself as “found media, modified.” Exhibited at L’Attico in 1966, *Prismobile* uses the “changing stripes” system of advertising (translucent plastic strips, with internal neon lighting). *Fantavisor* instead proposes superimpositions of images reflected and captured from the real context (a parallelepiped equipped with internal lights was the light source that made visible, by refraction, colored images reproduced on a glass plate, over which a second reflective surface was placed). On these practices, see A. Lissoni, *Variavision 1965. Prima del futuro del cinema, oltre le frontiere delle discipline*, doctoral thesis, University of Udine, a.y. 2010–2011; and also *Future Cinema. The Cinematic Imaginary After Film*, ed. by J. Shaw, P. Weibel, exhibition catalogue (Karlsruhe 2002), Cambridge (Mass.) 2003. The exhibition was dedicated to the complex relationships among the cinematic device, visual arts and new media.

15. In the early 1970s in Italy the term “comportamento” was used, while the term “performance” began to be used toward the middle of the decade to indicate the actions of international artists and to present Italian artists on the occasion of foreign fairs (Basel ’74 and ’75 in particular). It is from 1977 that the term “performance” takes precedence, especially thanks to the International Performance Week. In the same year, moreover, a section called “Flash Art Performance” debuted in “Flash Art.” I thank Daniele Vergni for this note. See *Performances. Happenings, actions, events, activities, installations*, ed. by L. Inga-Pin, Padua 1978 (although some data are not exact).
16. I. Bernardi, *La Tartaruga. Storia di una galleria*, Milan 2018, p. 85.
17. In the chapter *Le avanguardie* by Maria Rosa Sossai we read not only of the presence of a movie camera filming the passage of spectators, but also, contradictorily, of its transmission on a monitor, an element whose presence is improbable, given that it was shot on film. “Video documentation creates a communicative and visual circuit between real time acted and recorded time that interact in the perception of reality.” M.R. Sossai, *Le avanguardie*, in Ead., *Arte video. Storie e culture del video d’artista in Italia*, Cinisello Balsamo 2002, p. 23. See also M. Calvesi, *Arte e tempo*, in *Teatro delle mostre*, ed. by M. Mussio, A. Bonito Oliva, exhibition catalogue (Rome), Milan 1968.
18. The images of visitors impressed on film during the day (such was the duration of each intervention in *Teatro delle mostre*) together with the sounds captured by microphones installed in the environment flowed into a film of the same title, in which Franco Angeli reworked, by editing and superimposing other images and sounds, what he had shot during the installation. “The film *Opprimente*, first presented at the 6th Premio Masaccio in San Giovanni Valdarno [...] in a version lasting 45:00 minutes that we can hypothesize as the original, is currently untraceable, but a shorter version of 24:40 minutes survives. In the version of the film that was viewed, shots of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana in the EUR district are frequently superimposed on the gallery interiors and, precisely in correspondence with these scenes, Angeli edited in the

soundtrack recorded in the gallery during the installation *Opprimente*. One clearly distinguishes the footsteps of spectators moving through the environment and commenting on that experience; the sounds and noises of the gallery, moreover, are fused and superimposed on the noises of the city and in particular on the voices and confusion of a demonstration protesting the municipal administration", E. Francesconi, *Franco Angeli e Tano Festa, pittori con la macchina da presa*, Milan 2018, p. 108.

19. Already in the mid-1970s, Luciano Giaccari, director of Studio 970/2, proposed a taxonomy aimed at bringing order to the multiplicity of video performance and video environment practices. See L. Giaccari, *È nata l'arte dell'era televisiva. Veni, Video, Vici?*, "Bolaffi Arte", 49, 1975, pp. 77–81; also in L. Giaccari, *La Videoteca - La classificazione - La mostra*, in *Memoria del video 1. La distanza della storia. Venti anni di video in Italia raccolti da Luciano Giaccari*, ed. by M. Meneguzzo, exhibition catalogue, Milan 1987, pp. 48–58. See also C.G. Saba, *Excursus sui modi di produzione e disseminazione del video in ambito artistico in Italia dagli anni Settanta a oggi*, in *Videoarte in Italia. Il video rende felici*, ed. by Ead., V. Valentini, cited.
20. M. Calvesi, *Schermi T.V. al posto dei quadri*, "L'Espresso", 15 March 1970, also published in Id., *Azioni al video*, in Id., *Avanguardia di massa*, Milan 1979, p. 227.
21. F. Gallo, *Verso le videoinstallazioni. Tecniche e linguaggi elettronici in Italia negli anni Settanta*, "Rolsa. Rivista on-line di Storia dell'Arte", 4, 2005, p. 7. See the already cited *Teatro delle mostre* catalogue, and also E. Francesconi, *Franco Angeli e Tano Festa...*, cited, p. 108, where the author writes: "The project provides the only indication, at present known, regarding the position of the movie camera, placed on the long side of the room, facing the wall where the entrance and exit doors were located, in order to record the spectator's reactions during their stay in the environment."
22. F. Gallo, *Verso le videoinstallazioni...*, cited, p. 9.
23. See L. Parolo, *Il linguaggio artistico di Michele Sambin dal film alla video-performance musicale (1968-1982). Ipotesi per la conservazione, il restauro e la riproposta attuale di 'Looking for listening' (1977)*, vol. II, MA thesis, University of Padua, a.y. 2011–2012, p. 101.
24. The action *The box of life*, realized at the Centro Video Arte of Ferrara in 1978, was shot on film by director Giangi Poli, with spectators as an integral part of the film, and then transferred to video.
25. F.D. D'Amico, *Per una cartografia dello spazio elettronico* (unpublished). The tape in fact continues circularly to be written by real-time shooting and overwritten by the recording, slightly offset.
26. The work is inspired by these verses by Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207–1273), a Persian poet often present in the artist's memory: "Although water is enclosed in a cistern / the air will make it evaporate, since it supports it", B. Viola, *Vedere con la mente e con il cuore*, ed. by V. Valentini, Rome 1993, pp. 113–114.
27. See *Camere incantate / Espansione dell'immagine: video, cinema*,

- fotografia e arte negli anni '70*, ed. by V. Fagone, exhibition catalogue, Milan 1980. The Italian artists present were: Vincenzo Agnetti, Valentina Berardinone, Cioni Carpi, Fernando De Filippi, Paolo Gioli, Andrea Granchi, Ugo La Pietra, Plinio Martelli, Fabio Mauri, Ugo Nespolo, Antonio Paradiso, Luca Maria Patella, Fabrizio Plessi, Angela Ricci Lucchi, Michele Sambin, Aldo Tagliaferro, Franco Vaccari, Luigi Veronese, Luigi Viola, Michele Zaza. There were also group presences: Gruppo videoarte Ferrara (Cintoli, Marangoni, Marchegiani, Abramović–Ulay). The works – selecting only Italian artists – were varied: installations with photographs (Agnetti), films, performance-installation (Ricci Lucchi and Gianikian), Super8 films with objects, 16 mm films transferred to video + slides, performance + film, performance + installation. Among the international artists: Christian Boltanski, Jochen Gerz, Dan Graham, Nam June Paik, Rebecca Horn, Christina Kubisch, Urs Lüthi, Norman Mc Laren, Gerald Minkoff, Muriel Olesen, Meret Oppenheim, Michael Snow, the Buenos Aires Group, the Belgrade University's Student Cultural Center with Sanja Iveković and Dalibor Martinis, the Antwerpen Group with Matta-Clark and Gina Pane.
28. Ibid., p. 17.
 29. Peter Handke, *Cavalcata sul lago di Costanza*. Translation by Romana Cedraschi; direction by Simone Carella; with Rossella Or, Maurizio Di Mattia, Donilde Humphries, Vittorio Micci, Natale Russo; music by Alvin Curran and Lucinello Barti; set design by Mario Romano; collaboration by Francesco Lattuada. Rome, Beat 72, 27 December 1975.
 30. See *La camera astratta. Tre spettacoli tra teatro e video*, ed. by V. Valentini, Milan 1988.
 31. M. Adami, *La forma video. Tra cinema e arti visive dopo il digitale*, Milan 2020, p. 5.
 32. See P. Dubois, *La questione della 'forma-schermo' nelle installazioni*, cited.
 33. D. Correale in E. Haentjens, *A conversation with Danilo Correale. On worktime, sleeptime and dreamtime*, "Z33", 13 July 2020. "I wanted to imitate the abstract images you begin to see when you close your eyes and put your finger on them," the artist continues in relation to the images.
 34. *Oracolo Ulisse* is an interactive installation from 1995, in which the spectator undertakes a journey through music and virtual scenarios that change and modify depending on the position of the body of the person seated on the throne, the movements of the hand holding the scepter and the heartbeat. At the end of the journey, the oracle issues its response.
 35. Studio Azzurro, *Le zattere dei sentimenti*, in Id., *Immagini vive*, Milan 2005, n.p. See also the page dedicated to the work on Studio Azzurro's website (as in the original).
 36. R. Bellour, *Un autre cinéma* [2000], Italian trans. *Di un altro cinema*, in *Le storie del video*, ed. by V. Valentini, cited, pp. 299–318.
 37. A. Lissoni, *Forme di resistenza. Il video alle prese con il mantenimento della sua identità*, "Close up", 17, 2005–2006, p. 34.

38. D. Puppi in *Daniele Puppi at HangarBicocca* in Milan, "Exibart", 11 February 2008 (as in the original reference). See also R. Grisolia, *L'immagine variabile*, in *Medium senza medium...*, ed. by V. Valentini, C.G. Saba, cited, pp. 221–229.
39. On this theme, see the general introduction to *Videoarte in Italia. Il video rende felici*, ed. by C.G. Saba, V. Valentini, cited.
40. See Rosa Barba, *From source to poem*, ed. by R. Tenconi, exhibition catalogue (Milan), Berlin 2017.
41. At the end of the millennium, as Milo Adami writes (*La forma video...*, cited, p. 132), "It is the interactive and installation soul of video that seems to have developed and fragmented the most within the flow of Live Media Arts, welcomed, recognized and valued in forms ranging from video mapping to interactive video environments, multi-projections, live VJing, but at the same time, as Alessandro Amaducci rightly observes (in his volume *Videoarte. Storie, autori, linguaggi*), inevitably distancing itself from the contemporary art field." See also A. Amaducci, *Videoarte. Storia, autori, linguaggi*, Turin 2014, p. 148.

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trieste contemporanea committee

italy / 34122 trieste / via del monte 2/1

info@triestecontemporanea.it

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