Post-Translational Belonging:

The Languages of the Future in Trans-East Asian Circuits of New Media Art after 1984

By

Kyungso Min

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The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:
        Jill H. Casid, Professor, Art History
        Yuhang Li, Associate Professor, Art History
        Quitman E. Phillips, Emeritus Professor, Art History
        Steven C. Ridgely, Associate Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures

Table of Contents

Abstract

This dissertation offers a region-specific account of trans-East Asian new media art that aims to

challenge the dominance of English and create conditions of technologically-mediated belonging

beyond language. It examines the ways in which the operating languages of new media are

reprogrammed in the works of six artists and artists' collectives under the changing state of the

global and according to the historically and practically specific conditions of East Asia from the

mid-1980s to the present. It begins with Korean-born American artist Nam June Paik's farewell

performance to George Orwell's dystopian vision of a technologically controlled future. The

year 1984 signals a watershed moment for trans-East Asian new media art and theories that

materialize a desire for new modes of global intimacy—what I call post-translational belonging.

To this end, Part One investigates Paik's seminal contribution by reframing his satellite trilogy

(1984–88) as pivotal in providing the historical and practical origins and creative conditions for

the emergence of influential artistic experiments and movements in the transnational circuits of

East Asia. Part Two turns to Masaki Fujihata, Xu Bing, Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries,

Dumb Type, and Daito Manabe as case studies of contemporary new media artists whose

projects propose alternative notions and methods of global communication. These artists share an

interest in how post-translational modes of global interaction unsettle and even deactivate the

existing criteria, hierarchies, and prejudices embedded in conventional language systems. These

projects take two main directions: the haptic, visual, and kinesthetic reformulation of the

technologies of reading and the reconfiguration of the human body as a graph and its skin surface

as a communicative and contemplative interface. By conceptualizing such non-verbal, sensorial,

and gestural communication models as the languages of the future, this dissertation demonstrates

how these artists reconceive the new media art space in ways that are beyond language and also shift the geopolitical axis of digital globalization. Ultimately, this dissertation intervenes in art historical scholarship and in its area-centered methodologies by rewriting the history of global art practices with attention to new media technology through artistic examples created in trans-East Asian circuits.

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In line with this dissertation's argument that existing languages are incomplete, no words can fully convey my gratitude to the people who made this project possible. First and foremost, I am immensely grateful to my advisor, mentor, and role model as a teacher and scholar, Prof. Jill H. Casid. Thank you for your endless support, encouragement, patience, and belief in me even when I was suspicious of myself. You always directed me to challenge myself further and do that with confidence. With you, I feel like anything is possible.

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List of Figures

June Paik Archive (NJP.4.EPH.4A); Gift from Seymour Barofsky for the Estate of John J. O'Connor. © ARTnews, LLC; cover photo by Michael Halsband/Landov.

Figure 1.14 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, 1984, postcard, 4 1/4 x 6 1/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.15 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("George Plimpton") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.16 Nam June Paik, Illustration for *Good Morning Mr. Orwell*, from a booklet for a VHS set, *SAT-ART III* (Tokyo: SONY, 1988), p. 54.

Figure 1.17 Nam June Paik, *1984 Invaders*, from *V-Idea, a priori*, 1984, etching and aquatint, 11 7/8 × 14 7/8 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Dodie Kazanjian and Calvin Tomkins, 2018.

Figure 1.18 Nam June Paik, Illustration for *Bye Bye Kipling*, from a booklet for a VHS set, *SAT-ART III* (Tokyo: SONY, 1988), p. 80.

Figure 1.19 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.20 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.21 Nam June Paik, Illustration for *Wrap Around the World*, from a booklet for a VHS set, *SAT-ART III* (Tokyo: SONY, 1988), p. 21.

Figure 1.22 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* video still, 1988, single-channel video, 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.23 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* video still, 1988, live version, 82:50 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1988 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.24 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* video still, 1988, live version, 82:50 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1988 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.25 Frank Lopes, Set design of *Wrap Around the World*, 1988, photomechanical print, 12 3/4 × 8 1/2 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.PAPERS.57); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.26 Nam June Paik, *The More, The Better*, 1988, video installation, four-channel video, color, sound, 1003 monitors (6 in., 10 in., 14 in., 20 in., 25 in.); steel, 60.8 x 36 x 36 ft. National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, Gwacheon, South Korea.

Figure 1.27 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("The Language of the Future") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum,

Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.28 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("The Language of the Future") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.29 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Title") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.30 Nam June Paik, *Butterfly* video still, 1986, single-channel video, 2:03 min. color, sound © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.31 Nam June Paik, *Untitled Photograph or Video Still (Laurie Anderson)*, 1995, photographic print on paper, sheet: 11 x 14 in. image: 10 1/2 x 13 1/2 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.120); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.32 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Cavalcade of Intellectuals") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.33 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("Bowie/Sakamoto Interview") video still, 1988, single-channel video, 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.34 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("Interlocator") video still, 1988, single-channel video, 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.35 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Space Feedback") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.36 Nam June Paik, First Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, 1983, p. 7, paper with typed text, 11 x 8 in., 9 pages, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 7); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.37 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* ("Mudang") video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.38 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* ("Mudang") video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.39 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("TV Shrine") video still, 1988, single-channel video. 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.40 Nam June Paik, *Gut for Joseph Beuys* video still, 1990, Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.41 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Cage/Beuys") video still, 1984, single-channel video. 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.42 Nam June Paik, Storyboard for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, 1983, from Nam June Paik, *Art for 25 Million People: Bon Jour, Monsieur Orwell* (Berlin: Daadgalerie, 1984), Appendix 5, n.p.

Figure 1.43 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("Transpacific Duet") video still, 1988, single-channel video. 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.44 Nam June Paik, Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* ("Video Ball") video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.45 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("The More, The Better") video still, 1988, single-channel video. 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.46 Nam June Paik, *SAT-ART III video set*, 1988, VHS video cassettes with two-part sleeve (plastic and printed cardstock) in wooden box. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.VID.65A-D); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.47 Nam June Paik, *SAT-ART III video wooden box*, 1988, wood. 4 5/8 x 4 3/4 x 8 3/8 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.VIDC.25); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.48 Nam June Paik, *SAT-ART III video box bandana*, 1988, cotton fabric, 19 1/4 x 20 1/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.VIDC.26); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.49 Nam June Paik, *Nomad Suitcase*, 2004, single-channel video installation with two 20 in. monitors and acrylic paint on suitcase, 42 1/2 × 42 1/2 × 20 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge. Gift of the Hakuta Family.

Figure 1.50 Nam June Paik (?), *Untitled drawing*, undated, oil stick on paper, 22 1/4 x 30 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.458); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.51 Nam June Paik (?), *Untitled drawing*, undated, oil stick on paper, 22 1/4 x 30 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.467); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.52 Nam June Paik and Allen Ginsberg (?), *Paper with Orwell Inscription*, undated, print on paper, 22 1/4 x 30 1/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.57); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Chapter Two

Figure 2.1 Masaki Fujihata, *Beyond Pages*, 1995–97, specifically designed room, custom-made table (digitalizer tablet) and chair, table lamp, data projector x 2, Macintosh 7600 x 1 with additional graphics card, one powered speaker. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.2 Masaki Fujihata, *Masaki Fujihata*, 2016, cardboard box, three-hole binding book, 9 x 9 in. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.3 Masaki Fujihata, *Beyond Pages* AR marker, from Masaki Fujihata, *Masaki Fujihata* (Paris: éditions Anarchive, 2016), n.p. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.4 Masaki Fujihata, *Beyond Pages* AR video, from Masaki Fujihata, *Masaki Fujihata* (Paris: éditions Anarchive, 2016), n.p. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.5 Masaki Fujihata, *Be Here*, 2018, site-specific public project, Hong Kong. Photo Credit: Kyungso Min.

Figure 2.6 Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky*, 1987–91, mixed media installation / hand-printed books and scrolls printed from blocks inscribed with "false" Chinese characters. Installation view at Elvehjem Museum of Art, Madison, 1991. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.7 Xu Bing, *Book from the Ground*–Interactive Software Installation, 2003–. Installation view at Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2007. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.8 Screenshots of Xu Bing, *Book from the Ground*–Interactive Software, 2006–. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.9 Cover of Xu Bing, *Book from the Ground: From Point to Point*, 2003–12. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.10 Cover of Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Pacific Limn*, 2013. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.11 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Pacific Limn*, 2013. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.12 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Pacific Limn* (trailer) video still, 2013, video, 1:10 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.13 Screenshot of Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries Website, "YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES / SET IN MONACO" Page. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.14 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Miss DMZ* video still, color, sound, text, 11:28 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Conclusion

Note to the Reader

For East Asian names in this dissertation, I use English order (surname last) in general, such as

"Ufan Lee" and "Teiji Furuhashi." When referring to artists or authors who use Asian order

(surname first) for English-language materials, I follow their preference, such as "Xu Bing" and

"Moon Kyungwon." I also stick to the romanization of Korean personal names written for

English-language materials with variations with a space or a hyphen, such as "Nam June Paik"

and "Young-Hae Chang."

Introduction

The Languages of the Future

1. The Languages of the Future after 1984

First appearing on public television on January 1, 1984, the ambitious performance trilogy of

Korean-born American artist Nam June Paik (1932–2006)—*Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* (1984),

Bye Bye Kipling (1986), and *Wrap Around the World* (1988)—reached one hundred million TV

viewers in the Americas, Asia, and Europe, a feat made possible by using satellite transmission

as an artistic medium. The mesmerizing array of images, sound, bodies, actions, and senses

choreographed by this satellite transmission presented an entirely new form of interactive

experience that, I argue, traversed the geopolitical hierarchy of languages to a space-time beyond

them. This dissertation takes its point of departure from Paik's declaration in the first script for

Good Morning, Mr. Orwell: "Twenty First Century will begin on January First 1984 noon by

us."[1]

The Orwellian 1984 projects a dystopian vision of the technological condition of human

life that was collapsed by Paik's satellite performances. The year 1984 and Paik's transmission

mark a watershed moment in the East Asian new media art movement that continues to re-orient

imagined technologies from a so-called West and redeploy them transnationally to shape new

global sites of interaction.[2] Starting with Paik and his influence, this dissertation elaborates the

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[1] Nam June Paik, "First Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*," c. 1983, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 7), 9.

[2] Although studies of contemporary media and visual cultures have widely adopted "new media" as a critical currency, contention about its representativeness still exists. This is mainly due to the fact that any media is "new" at the moment of its invention and all media is destined to be obsolete at some point. However, as media theorist Mark B. N. Hansen points out, such an evolutionary potential, signified by the adjective "new," characterizes what media is and means to us. Thus, he defines new media as "an expression that indexes the changing vocation of media itself" more than a designation of the newest of

ways in which new media artists and artists' collectives working in trans-East Asian circuits developed non-verbal, sensorial, and gestural languages to enact post-translational belonging. I define "post-translational" as the utopian striving for collective spectatorship and relation not reliant on shared languages and language translation. By proposing this relational practice as a new system of togetherness fashioned under the political, social, and aesthetic transformations of a globalizing East Asia, I argue that these artists destabilize, transfigure, and enlarge the media through which their spectators learn, reflect, and perceive their collective subjectivities. In so doing, this dissertation demonstrates the necessity of attending to particular trans-regional ways of shaping transnational sites of intimacy in the wake of globalization through new media-catalyzed modes of post-translational communication from the mid-1980s to the present.

1984 was never just a date. This dissertation takes a key conceptual cue from Paik's intervention into the significance of 1984 and its vision of the future. This dissertation's core concept, "the languages of the future," is developed out of the lyrics composed for the narrative music written by American avant-garde artist Laurie Anderson (b.1947) and included in her *United States Live* album released on January 1, 1984. Broadcast on the same day, Paik's *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* live show included Anderson's performance of this piece in which Anderson describes how she perceives "the language of the future" as "a kind of high-tech lingo" that conveys a "circuitry, electronic, switching" sense of human relationships.[3] Anderson's

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all prior media. By attending to the essential function of "the changing vocation" that the "new" of "new media" possesses, I use the term "new media art" for the art genre my case studies center. In this dissertation, "new media art" refers to various forms of contemporary art, whose conception, creation, presentation, distribution, or/and reception rely on both analog and digital communication technologies, computerized programs, and network systems that have appeared since the late twentieth century. Mark B. N. Hansen, "New Media," in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, eds. W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 183.

[3] Lyric of Laurie Anderson, "The Language of the Future," in Nam June Paik, "Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*," 1983, 8C-8D. The Collection of Dong-Sik Lee.

language of the future is expressed as a matter of relational feeling that may be essential for bonding with others but is also always in flux. I take up this phrase but replace the singular form of "language" with the plural "languages." In adapting "the languages of the future" to name the central idea of this dissertation, I aim to accentuate the multiplicity and versatility of the communicative systems and modalities with which South Korean, Japanese, and Chinese contemporary artists experiment in producing a sense of post-translational belonging through not so much "a kind of high-tech lingo" as adaptation of new media technology for sensory and affective social currents.

This dissertation takes the form of three chapters dedicated to three case studies about six contemporary artists and artists' collectives working in trans-East Asian circuits. In addition to Paik, I think with the works of Japanese media artist and theorist Masaki Fujihata (b.1956), Chinese artist Xu Bing (b.1955), Seoul-based new media art collective Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (hereafter YHCHI), the Japanese multi-media performance group Dumb Type, and Daito Manabe (b.1976) of Rhizomatiks Research, a Tokyo-based Japanese new media art initiative. The technological expansion beyond languages uncovers a much more intense and multilayered relational dimension of interhuman, intercultural, and interlingual communication in the creative practices of these artists. Across these chapters, I demonstrate how these artists' projects propose, in various ways, the technological agency of interaction as the languages of the future that no longer involve indirectness and non-simultaneity pertaining to the act of translation. I further argue for the works of these artists as affective operations of the languages of the future that activate (and deactivate) a sense of post-translational belonging with a dynamic mechanism of interactions beyond our limited linguistic experience and cultural knowledge.

This dissertation traces the evolutionary process by which the boundary of intercultural and interlingual communication has expanded to include multisensorial and performative stages of belonging. More specifically, I address three main directions in which new media artists working in trans-East Asian circuits conceive and generate relational situations that operate beyond the act of language translation. First, Chapter One considers how the transdisciplinary approach, transnational collaboration, and collective spectatorship in Paik's three satellite performances in the mid-1980s navigated and also intervened in global—even planetary—forms of connection. Chapter Two explores how the works of Fujihata, Xu Bing, and YHCHI reprogram the operation of reading practice as a sensorial (dis)involvement. Finally, Chapter Three analyzes how Dumb Type and Manabe fashion the performing body on stage and screen as a "body-graph" and its surfaces as a communicative and contemplative "skin-interface." With these varied emphases, the artists I discuss in this dissertation create a kind of *tabula rasa* of a new beginning that endeavors to nullify existing criteria, hierarchies, and prejudices embedded in conventional language systems and translation practices understood critically as the apparatus that demarcates our subjectivities. I claim that this positing of a post-translational horizon is critical to understanding trans-East Asian new media art's worldmaking aims.

I locate the post-translational aspirations of these artists within a larger transdisciplinary discourse of globalizing media arts, cultures, and aesthetics. In doing so, this dissertation also re-orients that discourse. Rather than merely securing their spaces in one chapter of the established chronology and atlas of contemporary art history, I demonstrate how contemporary artists in East Asia reconceive the new media art space in ways that are beyond language and shift the geopolitical axis of digital globalization toward centering trans-East Asian circuits. The efforts to seize the status quo of contemporary new media art and visual culture in the imaginary languages

of the future necessitate not only the local and global scales of such a world but even a cosmic dimension. By illuminating one path to detaching the geopolitical categories and linear temporality from the historical orders we have framed so far, this dissertation insists that trans-East Asian new media art's development of the post-translational languages of the future revitalizes the present and the past. Such contemplation on our past and present through the lens of a differently conceived future also entails rethinking history, not as an established fact but as one still developing on the shattered boundaries of the global and the local. Following this chain of thoughts and sensibilities produced by the languages of the future, this dissertation repositions the vibrant and burgeoning art practices shaped in trans-East Asian circuits as the central axis of a "new" new media art history.

2. The Translational and the Post-Translational

In order to explore how globalizing East Asian new media art prompts a necessary rethinking of the hegemony of language-based communication, which unavoidably entails the intervention of translation, I propose the idea and the practice of the post-translational as an analytical frame for the artworks examined in the following chapters. My neologism "the post-translational," with the proposition of "post" attached to "the translational," addresses the ways these works of art trouble the presumption of the concept and practice of translation as the effective conduit of global correspondence and aim to produce a clean slate on which a new model of communication can be envisioned and performed.

Since the Roman Empire, when, by certain accounts, the literature in translation first appeared, theories about the methods, functions, and impacts of translation have been established in various perspectives: while many writers of the Classical and early modern periods treated

translation as a means of enriching their mother languages, the thinkers in the late eighteenth-
and nineteenth-century put greater emphasis on maintaining a foreignness of the original in their
translations.[4] A new tendency that considers translation as a part of human acts of
communication was developed in the twentieth century. With this critical move, the idea of
translation came to be placed within broader discussions about the essence of language and
interpretive thinking, which ultimately directs us toward the question of the translatability or
untranslatability of the original.

In "The Task of the Translator" (1923), Walter Benjamin reframes the issue, challenging
us with the prospect of a method by which the translator would less translate than creatively
signal the untranslatability of the original. As he writes, the translator should "release in his own
language that pure language which is exiled among alien tongues, to liberate the language
imprisoned in a work in his recreation of that work."[5] This notion of "pure language" is
described by Benjamin as that "which no longer means or expresses anything but is, as
expressionless and creative Word, that which is meant in all languages." As a sort of supreme
stage of all languages that autonomically represents and produces itself, "pure language"
symbolizes the human desire for an ideal linguistic medium that transcends the multiplicity and
inconsistencies of our current language systems.[6] Put another way, it manifests the impossibility
of affirming the perfect equivalence between two different languages, and between the original
and its translated texts, that, if there is any, places the practice of translation more in the creative

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[4] Hugo Friedrich, "On the Art of Translation," in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, eds. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 11-16.

[5] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 1923, reprinted in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol.1, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996), 261.

[6] Ibid.

domains of art and literature. If, as Benjamin asserts, the translation should reveal "the *intentio* of the original not as reproduction but as harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself, as its own kind of *intentio*," we cannot help asking whether the conventions of translation can fulfill such a critical quest or whether art practices that aim beyond discrete languages would come closer to releasing this "pure language."[7]

To the French deconstructivist philosopher Jacques Derrida, translation is something closer to "a regulated transformation," in which the signified forms a "never pure" relationship with the signifier. In an interview with Julia Kristeva on semiology and grammatology, Derrida tells us that, "We will never have, and in fact have never had, to do with some 'transport' of pure signified from one language to another, or within one language, that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and untouched."[8] Since the transferring, transporting, and translating of one language into another cannot be completely "pure" and equivalent to all languages, a certain degree of transformation in the original intention of the translated utterance and writing is an inevitable consequence. Thus, as Derrida so profoundly addresses through the complicated mapping of what the word "Babel" means in his essay, "Des Tours de Babel" (1985), translation is a necessary but impossible task, and its necessity springs from its very impossibility.[9] Another question arises here: how can we then compromise such an incompatible pair of the necessity and the impossibility of translation without reassessing the concept of translation itself—including the potential for the post-translational work of new media art?

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[7] Ibid., 260.

[8] Jacques Derrida, *Position*s, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 20.

[9] Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," trans. Joseph F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 171.

Since the 1990s, many scholars have stressed that the practice of translation has embraced multilayered sociopolitical conditions, cultural and national identities, and individual subjectivities.[10] Japanese American literary critic Naoki Sakai, for example, criticizes the misconception of languages caused by "*a certain representation of translation*" that disguises "the two unities of the translating and the translated languages" as if they are "autonomous and closed" systems. Instead, through his distinctive trope of "the heterolingual address" that stresses the non-homogeneity of the relationship between addresser and addressee, Sakai urges us to recognize the ways in which translation structures social and political relations and produces a new aggregation whose members still maintain (linguistic) distances and differences among themselves.[11] More significantly, Sakai penetrates the power of translation or "the representation of translation" that composes the unity of national languages by hastily and inadequately assuming itself as "a communication between two clearly delineated linguistic communities."[12] Therefore, as an instrument to expose, mark, and stabilize the disjunctive points between different national, ethnic, and linguistic communities, translation renders belonging to specific group(s) definite.

This dissertation heeds Sakai's call for reconsidering translation, not as a mere communication device but as a way to address a heterogeneous audience. However, I go further by arguing that the practice of translation is a failed model of translingual communication, especially in the ever-expanding and tightening global world that demands another conceptual

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[10] Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Annie Brisset, "The Search for a Native Language: Translation and Cultural Identity," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 343-75; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 397-416.

[11] Sakai, 2.

[12] Ibid., 15.

and practical tool to interpret the interaction among a heterolingual audience without the achievement of such never reachable "pure languages." Through the conceptual prisms of "the post-translational" and "post-translational belonging," therefore, this dissertation analyzes the aims to challenge the dominance of English and create the sensory and aesthetic conditions of a technologically-mediated sense of belonging without relying on the translatability of existing languages.

3. History and Theories of New Media Art from Trans-East Asian Circuits

This dissertation proposes regional inflection as an alternative angle that recenters the role of East Asian art and theory within Western-centric scholarship on global new media art history. Through an investigation of the local specificity that configures language's relation to self- and group-perception in trans-East Asian circuits, I explore how the artists of this non-English region reshape the new media art space as a dynamic site of community building after the digital turn by circumventing the existing structure of language translation. Moreover, as new media art has been shaped through blurring the boundaries between art, science, media culture, and everyday events, this dissertation also performs multiple levels of border-crossing. While attending to the region-specific political, social, and cultural landscape of trans-East Asian new media art development, it maps out the intersection of fast-changing thoughts and sensibilities about the global contemporary forged across the studies of visual culture, new media, affect, and information. Thus, this project is grounded not only in the art historical analysis of those artists' practices, but also in the transdisciplinary reconsideration of their significance for the broader understanding of globalization in the current digital epoch.

Art history and visual culture studies scholarship has begun to attend to the discourse of globalization, but, while ostensibly globally focused, retains the English language and the West as centers of gravity. Some scholars argue that digitalization and late capitalism's globalized mode of production and circulation have reconfigured the media culture environment, which necessitates transnational networks.[13] Other studies investigate the ways in which new media art's forms and contents are subject to the cultural politics of globalization by engaging with issues of the nation-state, borders, and migration.[14] How our habitual community boundaries are enlarged via new media technologies also contributes to various theoretical and philosophical perceptions of our sense of belonging, as presented in the fields of media anthropology and postcolonial studies since the 1990s. Cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's ideas of "diasporic public spheres" and "imagined worlds" label the transnational and post-national stages in which geopolitically disconnected subjects can imagine collective subjectivities as an alternative to nation-states.[15] Concerning the cultural specificity of the transnational flow in Asia, anthropologist Aihwa Ong understands citizenship as flexible and dependent on the political, economic, and cultural logics of capitalism.[16] In brief, scholarship to date claims that transformations in industrial structure and the ever-expanding scope of human interactions comprise universal conditions for transnational communication.

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[13] See, for example, Pamela M. Lee, *Forgetting the Art World* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012); David Joselit, *After Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

[14] Susan Buck-Morss, "Visual Studies and Global Imagination," *Papers of Surrealism* 2 (Summer 2004): 1-29; Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging* (London: Seagull, 2007); T. J. Demos, *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2013).

[15] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[16] Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

In contrast, I reveal how contemporary East Asian new media art prompts a necessary rethinking of the central concepts with which global studies, media theory, and new media art and visual culture scholarship to date understand collectivity in an extended sense, such as the "global village," the "virtual neighborhood," and "collective attachment."[17] Most crucially, this dissertation counters the dominant tendency—even in the foregoing studies—to consign contemporary East Asian art to the margins, if such work is acknowledged at all. In attending to the trans-regional axis of contemporary East Asian new media art creation, I re-orient that discourse and challenge the scholarship on the global contemporary and the history and theories of new media art, which has been dependent on regionalist and nationalist frames.

Furthermore, this dissertation seeks to provide a new conceptual framework for weaving a genealogy and constructing a critical discourse of East Asian new media art. In so doing, I avoid an analytical model based on mere comparison and contrast among three countries in which the artists were born, studied, lived, and worked while also acknowledging the specific sociopolitical circumstances that affected their artistic experimentation with language and technology. Simply equating artists with their places of origin standardizes the intricately tangled topography of contemporary art as superficial and fragmentary stories and reduces historical thinking to repetition. Given the cultural shifts in the wake of the digital, the flexible categories of nations, continents, and cultures require far more subtlety and sensitivity. Postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion and methodology of "critical regionalism" accentuates this point by respecting the differences of multiple Asias. She proposes that we need an alternative model of

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[17] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Appadurai, 178-99; Lauren Berlant, "Critical Inquiry, Affirmative Culture," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (Winter 2004): 445-51.

producing knowledge about Asias, distinct from a Western-centric, dichotomist way of

identifying, arranging, and historicizing Asia as a subordinated other.[18]

In a similar vein, some scholars in East Asian studies working in East Asia request that we

adopt local specificity as a strategic theoretical prism through which to contemplate on the global

world.[19] For example, in *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (2010), inter-Asian cultural

studies scholar Kuan-Hsing Chen describes a methodological re-orientation in the writing of

world history that refuses Europe and the U.S. as the given point of reference:

> [U]sing the idea of Asia as an imaginary anchoring point, societies in Asia become each other's points of reference, so that the understanding of the self may be transformed, and subjectivity rebuilt. On this basis, the diverse historical experiences and rich social practices of Asia may be mobilized to provide alternative horizons and perspectives. This method of engagement, I believe, has the potential to advance a different understanding of world history.[20]

Chen's insistence on being "each other's points of reference" is especially relevant to this

dissertation's practical aims to restructure the current topography of new media art history by

thinking along trans-East Asian circuits. Such a method also holds the potential for transforming

the studies of East Asia and East Asian art by emancipating them from the narrow sense of

nationalism and the generalizing sense of globalization by attending to the flux, shift, and transit

that occur on the "circuit." That is, trans-East Asian circuits produce a discursive channel for

generating and transforming knowledge about global new media art from a critically regional

perspective.

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[18] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

[19] Sun Ge, *Asiaraneun sayugonggan* 아시아라는 사유공간 [Asia as a Space of Thinking], trans. Junpil Ryu (Seoul: Changbi Publishers, 2003); Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Chin-Seop Yun, *Geullokeollijeumgwa asiaui hyeondaemisul* 글로컬리즘과 아시아의 현대미술 [Glocalism and Asian Contemporary Art] (Seoul: Samunnanjeok, 2014).

[20] Chen, *Asia as Method*, 212.

Thus, throughout the three main chapters, I connect Paik's farsighted idea and experimentations with the languages of the future to the art practice of Fujihata, Xu Bing, YHCHI, Dumb Type, and Manabe. In general, these artists, mainly from South Korea, Japan, and China, were educated and began their artistic careers under the banner of technological globalization that accompanied the rapid digital shift in the 1990s. Each critically questions the efficacy and validity of the conventional model of global communication based on national language systems and language translation by mapping alternate trajectories. With this in mind, I demonstrate that these artists' experiments with new media technology shape discursive and practical sites of post-translational belonging.

4. Methodological Approach

In addition to the relative marginalization of the East Asia-specific perspectives within the formation of global new media art history scholarship, the imbalance of the historical records related to my case study artists in terms of both quality and quantity—especially Paik versus the rest—requires alternative tactics to build a trans-regional genealogy of this relatively new genre. In order to draw a bigger picture of the transnational movements of artistic investigation engaged with the languages of the future, I split the main chapters into two parts; each takes a different approach to highlighting the continuity and necessity of such creative efforts in the new media art circuits of trans-East Asia.

Part One refashions Paik's satellite broadcasting series as a cornerstone piece for propelling art's convergence with technology through my detailed interpretation of the archival materials and graphic works drawn from the Nam June Paik Archive at Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM), Washington, DC (hereafter the Paik Archive), and the selected segments

of the satellite pieces. In Part Two, I delve into case studies of East Asian new media artists who employ Paik's three strategies of transnational experimentation, trans-professional collaboration, and collective spectatorship to expand the dimensions of intercultural communication to multisensorial and performative sites of post-translational belonging. Given the relative lack of archival materials and scholarly works related to this more recent generation of artists, I investigate their artworks in my careful selection through a set of concepts I created in conjunction with my reading of Paik's works and essays in Part One, along with personal interviews with these artists and an analysis of their own critical writings.

Paik's broad graphic output that I examine in Chapter One, ranging from sketchbook drawings with notes, colored prints, photomontages, and catalog illustrations, to sketches on event scripts and program notes, form what I refer to as a "lacuna" in the current scholarship on him. The importance of this "lacuna" serves as the central concept from which I assess Paik's works and aesthetics. There are several reasons why these types of works have had less academic and curatorial attention than his Fluxus performances in the 1950s and 60s and electronic media-based projects in the 1970s through 2000s. First, they are considered less avant-garde in terms of medium, which accounts, in part, for their exclusion from Paik's major exhibitions and publications in favor of other media. The exhibitions "Paik on Paper: The Peter Wenzel Collection" at the Museum Bochum in Germany (2006), "Nam June Paik: The Late Style" at Gagosian Gallery Hong Kong (2015), and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's "Nam June Paik: In Character" (2017) are the only noteworthy recent exceptions that have brought Paik's late style—in which graphic works are taken to be more prominent—into focus.[21] The

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[21] Hans-Günter Golinski, *Paik on Paper: Sammlung Peter Wenzel* (Cologne: Salon, 2006); Nam June Paik, *Nam June Paik: The Late Style* (Hong Kong: Gagosian Gallery; New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2015).

emphasis in these exhibitions framed them as a single collective style based on media and techniques rather than analysis of what these graphic works do.

There is an additional problem of treating Paik's graphic work as characteristic of so-called late style production, particularly given the absence of the artist's signature and the lack of dates, exhibition histories, and production background that would periodize the graphic work. It is presumed that the majority of these small-sized prints and drawings were made in the last decade of his life when his body was partially paralyzed as a sequela of a stroke in 1996. Looking ostensibly unfinished, these were left unframed and disorganized at his SoHo studios in New York before entering SAAM's collection and constituting the Paik Archive in 2009. Many are also scattered in public and private collections worldwide. I argue, however, that, alongside their sheer number, the versatility of this graphic art collection and other archival materials possess the potential to pave new discursive paths for grappling with how Paik adopted electronic media art as a language.

The majority of the existing scholarship on Fujihata, Xu Bing, and Dumb Type consists of single artist catalogs, including the ones written by the artists themselves, institution-initiated surveys, and anthologies.[22] Due to the text-based nature of their practices, the most substantial

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[22] For Fujihata, see Masaki Fujihata, *Āto to konpyūta: Atarashii bijutsu no shatei* アートとコンピュータ：新しい美術の射程 [Art and Computer: The Range of New Art] (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 1999); Masaki Fujihata, *Fujihata Masaki: fukanzensa no kokufuku imēji to media ni yotte tsukuridasareru aratana genjitsukan* 藤幡正樹：不完全さの克服イメージとメディアに よって創り出される，新たな現実感 [Masaki Fujihata: The Conquest of Imperfection New Realities Created with Images and Media] (Sukagawa: CCGA gendaigurafikkuātosentā, 2007); Masaki Fujihata, *Fukanzenna genjitsu: dejitaru media no keiken* 不完全な現実：デジタル・メディアの経験 [Imperfect Reality: Experience in Digital Media] (Tokyo: NTT Pub. Co., 2009); Masaki Fujihata, ed., *Masaki Fujihata*, trans., Matthew Fargo (Paris: éditions Anarchive, 2016).

For Xu Bing, see Britta Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing: Words without Meaning, Meaning without Words* (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); Roger T. Ames and Hsingyuan Tsao, eds., *Xu Bing and Contemporary Chinese Art: Cultural and Philosophical Reflections* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011); Mathieu Borysevicz, ed., *The Book about Xu Bing's Book from the Ground* (North Adams, MA: Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary

studies on YHCHI come from the field of literature.[23] In the case of Manabe, a relatively young

artist who began his artistic career in the new millennium, only a few artist interviews in journals

and video documentaries, short exhibition catalogs, and review articles exist.[24] There are two

main reasons for this lack of scholarship. First, the work of historicizing contemporary art in East

Asia still prefers chronological accounts and classification by conventional criteria (media,

genre, technique, school, generation, region, and country), which is insufficient to account for

the multi-professional, transnational, and cross-genre features of the actual artworks of these

artists.[25] Second, the institutionalizing appraisals of art museum and gallery-led criticism are

often conceptually inadequate to grapple with the social and political aims of new media art. In

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Art; Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014); Yeewan Koon, *It Begins with Metamorphosis: Xu Bing* (Hong Kong: Asia Society, Hong Kong Center, 2014); Xu Bing, *XU Bing: Book from the Sky to Book from the Ground* (Woodbridge: ACC Art Books, 2020).

For Dumb Type, see Dumb Type, *Memorandum: Teiji Furuhashi* メモランダム：古橋悌二 (Tokyo: Littlemore, 2000); Peter Eckersall, Edward Scheer, and Fujii Shintarō, eds. *The Dumb Type Reader* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2017); Dumb Type, *DUMB TYPE 1984 2019* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2019).

[23] Thom Swiss, "'Distance, Homelessness, Anonymity, and Insignificance': An Interview with Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries," *The Iowa Review Web* 4 (December 2002), https://uiowa.edu/~iareview/tirweb/feature/younghae/interview.html (accessed December 28, 2020); Katherine N. Hayles, *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), especially 124-29; Warren Liu, "Posthuman Difference: *Traveling to Utopia* with Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 4, no. 1 (2012): 1-20; Jessica Pressman, *Digital Modernism: Making it New in New Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 78-100.

[24] Daito Manabe and Motoi Ishibashi, *Transphère # 1 Daito Manabe + Motoi Ishibashi Paysages fertiles/Fertile Landscape* (Paris: les presses du reel, 2016); Daito Manabe and Motoki Masahiro, *Motoki masahiro x manabe daito shigoto no gokui* 本木雅弘 × 真鍋大度仕事の極意 [Motoki Masahiro x Manabe Daito The Secret of Work] (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2016); Mio Nakajima, "Tsugi kara mirai no saishin o tsudzukeru raizomati ku su no rekishi" 次から未来の最新を続けるライゾマティクスの歴史 [The History of Rhizomatiks Who Continues the Latest from the Next to the Future], *Bijutsu techo* 69, no. 1048 (January 2017): 62-71.

[25] See, for example, Alexandra Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994); Wu Hung, *Contemporary Chinese Art: A History, 1970s–2000s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014); Yeon Shim Chung et al., eds., *Korean Art from 1953: Collision, Innovation, Interaction* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2020).

this regard, this dissertation intervenes to encompass the dynamic ecology of trans-East Asian new media art by concentrating on the artistic strategies for enacting the sensory mode of reading and gestural languages of post-translational communication on stage and screen, which I describe as the languages of the future.

The selected projects of Fujihata, Xu Bing, YHCHI, Dumb Type, and Manabe constitute the core examples for my latter two chapters, which zoom in on how new media technology redirects our conception and enactment of transnational collectivity in the East Asian art scene since the mid-1990s. The new media art practices of these five artists and artists' groups, with their varied ideas, media, and experimental directions, challenge the hegemonic status of the conventional language system as a superior medium of interaction and provide alternatives to the classic notion of global communication. Toward this end, I present theoretical investigations of these new types of communication contingent on technologically reconfigured text, human body, and connectivity while drawing on theoretical work in the intersecting fields of visual culture, media, affect, and information semiotics studies. In terms of the particular media on which this project focuses, my analysis necessarily embraces the wide range of new and newer media art forms, including HD films and multi-channel video projections with sound, multi-media installations and performances, VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) devices, computer programming, and web art. I contend that these diversified and hybridized formats serve as technological and conceptual foundations for a new media-enabled, East Asian reconception of the languages of the future.

As another analytical tactic to demonstrate that the languages of the future extend to the discourses that frame these practices, I intentionally make participation in this practice that emphasizes the versatility of language part of the way this dissertation treats the language of

analysis. Throughout the chapters, I apply a number of conceptual neologisms when discussing specific artworks and artists that play with the possibilities of polysemy, the use of homonyms, and conjugations. For instance, in Chapter One, I use a "lacuna" to designate a generative site through which Paik envisions and fosters new modes of connection through the hiatus, fragmentation, and chance produced by electronic media technology. In Chapter Three, I reread the second word of Dumb Type's group name, "type," not only as a noun meaning kind but also as an active verb to characterize how the performers' bodies "type" a message toward the audience on stage and screen. This modified reading of the grammatical function of "type" further engenders my concept of a "body-graph" that identifies the gestural languages of the future discovered in Dumb Type's performances and performative installations.

Finally, I delve throughout into the ways in which East Asian artists and scholars rearticulate the idea of new media and its operating languages under the changing situation of the global by addressing the specific conditions of East Asia.[26] Formed within this trans-continental conversation, this dissertation proposes a regional inflection of the global as an alternative angle that recenters the role of East Asian new media art and theory within the Western-centric scholarship on the transnational history of contemporary art.

5. Chapter Summaries

This dissertation consists of three thematically organized chapters. In the first chapter that comprises Part One, I address how Paik envisions global intimacy through the "illegible,

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[26] Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (New York: New American Library, 1962); McLuhan, *Understanding Media*; Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 2001); Alexander R. Galloway, *The Interface Effect* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012).

untranslatable" mechanism, or post-verbal means of communication that was first concretized in 1984 through his pioneering satellite broadcasting series. Then, in Part Two (Chapters Two and Three), I present case studies of five new media artists and artists' collaboratives from South Korea (YHCHI), Japan (Fujihata, Dumb Type, and Manabe), and China (Xu Bing). By attending to themes of "sensorial reading" and "embodied languages," each of the latter two chapters delineates how such non-verbal, sensorial, and gestural languages of the future for post-translational belonging have evolved in trans-East Asian circuits since Paik's satellite project.

Chapter One, "Groovin' in a Lacuna: Nam June Paik's Satellite Interventions of the Global," proposes the image-sound fragments in Paik's three satellite performances as post-translational alternatives founded on a linguistic fissure, or what I call a "lacuna." Through extensive study of archival papers, graphic works, and the artist's library collection and essays that reveal Paik's concerns regarding artificial satellite and TV as well as his ideas of "random access" and "videory," this chapter recounts the cultural and technological conditions within which he sailed new media-enabled currents of global interaction through transnational and trans-professional collaboration. First, I demonstrate that Paik's use of TV- and planet-shaped graphic icons in writings, illustrations, prints, and videos reflects his identification of media with languages. I then show how the satellite trilogy concretized the idea of post-translational belonging through my analysis of the segments categorized by the three core subjects: language, human bodies, and gestures of paralleling, circling, and wrapping. Lastly, I elaborate on three concepts based on Chinese characters that Paik contrived to elevate the global intimacy via technology—*tenseijingo* (the languages of the alien bodies), *furoshiki tenka* (wrap around the world), and *innenbanri* (connection at a long distance). In doing so, I offer an alternative context for Paik's conceptual and practical contributions to contemporary new media art across time and

countries, departing from the conventional art historical positioning of him as an isolated genius within the chronology of avant-garde art often categorized by nation. Ultimately, this revisiting of Paik in the mid-1980s compels a necessary reevaluation of the histories and theories of new media art molded in and dispersed from the transnational circuits in East Asia.

Chapter Two, "The Art of Sensorial Reading," examines how the works of Fujihata, Xu Bing, and YHCHI reshape the material state of the book and reprogram technologies of reading through sensorial intervention. This chapter analyzes their artistic appropriation of the information semiotic concept of "technological grammatization," a creative condition for controlling our consciousness as new media technology substitutes for the previously solely human acts of generating, transmitting, and receiving information. First, I juxtapose Fujihata's two VR/AR technology-initiative books that rematerialize the act of reading as a haptic practice with Xu Bing's translation software programs and graphic novel that rely on our communal experience of the visual world. Then I focus on the kinesthetic shifts of literary texts from pages to screen in the web art of YHCHI that disables the autonomous participation of viewer-readers. Finally, through these examples, I answer the questions of what roles and necessities, if any, languages retain in the age of digital media and press us to radically consider the possibility of the reconstruction of experience without them.

Chapter Three, "Embodied Languages: Dumb Type's Performing Bodies as Graphs and Interfaces," scrutinizes how the works of Dumb Type attract a heterolingual audience through their body gestures and movements on stage and physical and virtual presence in an installation space as the vital channels of communication. Particularly drawing on the concepts of the virtual skin that forms collective feelings and the affective embodiment of digital images, this chapter redefines the human body as a "body-graph" and its surface as a "skin-interface" that exercise

the agency of enframing information. By narrating the evolving trajectories of Dumb Type and its core members' multi-media performances and interactive installations from the early 1990s through the 2010s, I reveal how the Dumb Type performers' bodies play active roles as a "body-graph" and a "skin-interface" that substitute for conversational languages. In order to discuss how such an endeavor has flourished, especially in transdisciplinary collaboration within the Japanese new media art scene that has formed since Dumb Type's founding, this chapter also examines the ways in which Manabe manipulates human facial expressions as the communicative language of the future through myoelectric censors.

Each of these main chapters addresses the ways in which artists working in trans-East Asian circuits negotiate the idea of new media and its operating languages that emerged under the technologically changing state of the global. This dissertation maps out particular trans-regional pathways that enact global togetherness through the rhizomatic presence of new media art. By unearthing one approach to detaching the geopolitical categories and historical linearity originated in Euro- and U.S.-centric accounts, my project contributes to establishing the languages of the future as a discursive apparatus that reconfigures the global present and reinvigorates the past, which is no longer a single fixed history but one in constant invention and intervention.

Chapter One

Groovin' in a Lacuna: Nam June Paik's Satellite Intervention of the Global

Less known to the public than his sensational Fluxus performances and the media installations whose overwhelming scale have become his signature, a significant portion of Nam June Paik's *oeuvre* is constituted by small graphic drawings and hand-written notes on paper, magazine pages, and newspapers, most of which are untitled and undated. Now housed in SAAM's Paik Archive, one of these sketch-like notes **[Figure 1.1]** signals the nomadic facet of his experiments with languages and language translation, which has not received scholarly attention. A similar sketch on paper suggests that this note was drawn around 2003 while he was in New York after he suffered a stroke in 1996. This late graphic work was produced during the period that John G. Hanhardt, a curator of many of Paik's large-scale shows, characterizes as dominated by as "a self-reflective process of overcoming his lack of mobility by recovering his past through new forms of expression."[27]

Somewhat crudely inscribed with a dark blue color oil stick on paper, the contents on the right two columns are translated as,

> (first column) From the white fool, who dedicates [it] to the beauty in the world [under the heaven] and the artist(s) in connection at a long distance / because [I] will badger (?)
>
> (second column) Tomorrow, on Wednesday / ① I will see Osing (?) at 1:45 p.m. / ② go to Matsuzono at 6 p.m. / [I] will eat / although [I] don't have to eat[28]

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[27] John G. Hanhardt, *Nam June Paik: Global Visionary* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2012), 47.

Hanhardt has curated Paik's retrospective exhibitions at major art museums in the U.S. and abroad, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York ("Nam June Paik," April 30–June 27, 1982), Guggenheim Museum, New York ("The Worlds of Nam June Paik," February 11–April 26, 2000), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC ("Nam June Paik: Global Visionary," December 13, 2012–August 10, 2013), and Gagosian Hong Kong ("Nam June Paik: The Late Style," September 17–November 7, 2015).

[28] The original Japanese texts are:

I acknowledge that this is not a word-for-word translation mainly owing to the illegibility of

Paik's writing. For example, the phrase of "the beauty in the world [under the heaven]" in the

first column is a translation of *tenka bijin* 天下美人. Although it is unclear that the second

character, *ka* 下, meaning under, is what Paik actually wrote, it looks natural for me to read this

illegible letter as such. This is because *tenka* 天下 literally means "under the heaven" and

generally represents "the world," which is one of the most persistent subjects in his artistic

practice, especially in the satellite trilogy. One alternative reading of the second character would

be *pyō* 平, so that the phrase is *tenpyō bijin* 天平美人. This term *tenpyō bijin* originates from the

famous six-panel screen painting that depicts the feminine beauty, *Torige ritsujyo no byōbu* 鳥毛

立女屏風 [Folding Screen Panel with Bird Feathers Decorating the Painting of a Lady under a

Tree], now in the Shōsōin collection in Nara, Japan.[29] This screen was used in the Japanese

imperial palace during the Tenpyō era (729–749). In this context, the *tenpyō bijin* came to

designate beauty not only in this screen but also in the more general sense. That is, even if what

Paik intended to write is *tenpyō bijin*, my translation of this phrase as "the beauty in the world

[under the heaven]" does not change the overall meaning. Based on such an openness of

translational possibilities, I claim that this lack of clarity, uncertainty, and instability discovered

in Paik's pieces of writing direct us to see how he played with languages and portrayed his post-

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(first column) 天下(?)美人と/ 因縁萬理の/ アーチストに/ に捧ゲる白のバカから/ ネダルカら(?)
(second column) 明日水曜日は/ ① オシンを后１時45分"みて/ ② 后６時に/ 松園に行って/ タベ
テヤル/ タベナクテモイイケト

[29] Ken Nagashima, "'Torige ritsujyo no byōbu'zu no mochīfu ni tsuite" 「鳥毛立女屏風」図のモチー
フについて [Regarding the Motif of "Torige ritsujyo no byōbu"], *Shikan* 40 (December 1953): 31-44.

translational vision of the languages of the future (I will address this phrase fully later in this chapter).

Meanwhile, the blue-green colored lines on the left column transcribe the artist's name in four different writing systems: Japanese *katakana* (ナムジュン・パイク), Chinese characters (白南準), the Korean alphabet *hangeul* (백남준), and Roman letters (Nam June Paik). As a lingual manifestation of his boundless sense of belonging rather than of a linguistic and cultural constraint, this array of names emblematically maps out Paik's personal and artistic itineraries that traverse cities, countries, continents, and media. In a short text "Coming Out Positive" included in the *V-Idea, a priori* (1984) print series, *The New Yorker* art critic Calvin Tomkins (b.1925) describes how Paik's imperfect use of multiple languages makes perfect sense despite and even because of the mixture or "clash of opposites":

> Paik is at home everywhere and nowhere. His English is a little better than it was twenty years ago, but it still resembles no other spoken version of the language. I suspect that his German is much the same, and perhaps, by now, his Korean as well. He makes himself understood, though, no doubt about that. Like John Cage, his mentor, Paik converts the clash of opposites into bursts of clarity. East and West do not meet in Paik, but quite often their simultaneous activities generate revelations.[30]

I argue that the way Paik adapted and used the clash of languages illuminates his understanding of the global media transformation in the latter half of the twentieth century and its potential to replace the function of translation.

Paik was an untiring writer who left behind untold numbers of essays, statements, musical scores, event scripts, proposals, letters, short notes, and memos, some of which include multi-stage drafts, revisions, and translations. His strategic approach to written languages becomes

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[30] Calvin Tomkins wrote "Coming Out Positive" for Paik's limited set of ten etchings, *V-Idea, a priori,* co-published by Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati and Galerie Watari, Tokyo, Japan in 1984.

clear when all of his writings are considered together.[31] In formal contexts, such as

correspondence with institutions, public lectures, and interviews, he adopts the most proper style

and attitude on the basis of a clearly defined purpose and targeted reader on each occasion.

Written as the coordinator for *Good Morning Mr. Orwell* (1984), Paik's letters to his

collaborators show how he justifies the feasibility of his project in a polished American style and

convincing narrative that accompanies a budget estimate, a tentative schedule, and a list of his

sponsors worldwide.[32] Paik's acceptance speech script for the prestigious Kyoto Prize, awarded

to him in 1998 by the Inamori Foundation, Japan, was much more modest, but permeated by an

optimistic tone in its conciseness.[33] On the much informal and personal level, his hand-written

manuscripts and scribbled paper works demonstrate that he had a command of many languages

in speaking and writing and a gift for crossing over from one to another swiftly and skillfully.

Paik's multiple decades of global wandering enabled the artist to "[pick] up three Western

and three Eastern languages," including English, German, French, Korean, Japanese, and

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[31] Since the mid-1970s, Paik's texts have been translated into a number of languages and brought together in several publications, which serve as crucial resources for the scholarship on his art. Judson Rosebush, ed., *Nam June Paik: Videa 'n' Videology 1959–1973* (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1974); Nam June Paik, *Niederschriften eines Kulturnomaden: Aphorismen, Briefe, Texte,* ed. Edith Decker (Cologne: DuMont, 1992); Edith Decker and Irmaline Lebeer, eds., *Du Cheval à Christo et Autres Ecrits* (Brussels; Hamburg; Paris: Lebeer Hossmann, 1993); John G. Hanhardt, Gregory Zinman, and Edith Decker-Phillips, eds., *We Are in Open Circuits: Writings by Nam June Paik* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2019).

In 2010, Decker and Lebeer's *Du Cheval à Christo et Autres Ecrits*, which compiled Paik's English texts and published them in French, was retranslated into Korean. Edith Decker and Irmaline Lebeer, eds., *Baengnamjun: mareseo keuriseutokkaji* 백남준: 말에서 크리스토까지 [Nam June Paik: From Horse to Christo], trans. Wang-jun Im, Mi-ae Chong, and Mun-yong Kim (Yongin: Nam June Paik Art Center, 2010).

[32] Nam June Paik, Letter: "to Centre Pompidou," August 12, 1983, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 5); Nam June Paik, Letter: "to beuys/cage/cunningham/ginsberg," August 26, 1983, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 5).

[33] Nam June Paik, Acceptance Speech: "Your Imperial Highness, Ladies and Gentleman," 1998, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 1, Folder 4).

classical Chinese.[34] In his use of them, none were grammatically impeccable. They often appear

in forms of fragmentation, randomness, ellipsis, collision, and conflation, like the multilingual

cluster of the artist's signatures in Figure 1.1.[35] Barbara London, the first video art curator of the

Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), once described Paik's language as "abstract sounds

rather than comprehensible language."[36] Furthermore, in the course of translation into multiple

languages, some of his original papers have gone missing and only remain in translated

editions.[37] The transition from one language to another leads those who analyze Paik's work to

become lost in translation.[38] However, rather than considering this indeterminate state as a

condition of permanent illegibility, this chapter proposes that we understand the coexistence of

his multilingual names, even the interlinear spaces, as attestations to the polyglottic sensibility

Paik cultured in imagining the world around him and rendering new media technology as an

artist's medium, moving beyond translation.

1. The Illegible, the Untranslatable

It might be a cliché to begin a chapter about Paik with a narrative map of the multiple

transnational movements across his life and lifework. The necessity of doing so, however,

springs from the fact that his trajectory dotted on a world map allows us not only to chart which

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[34] Nam June Paik, "Expanded Education for the Paper-less Society," 1968, reprinted in *Videa 'n' Videology*, 39.

[35] Calvin Tomkins, *The Scene: Reports on Post-modern Art* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 205.

[36] Barbara London, *Video Art: The First Fifty Years* (London: Phaidon Press, 2020), 45.

[37] The editor of Paik's selected writings in German (*Niederschriften eines Kulturnomaden: Aphorismen, Briefe, Texte*), Edith Decker-Phillips points out the original English version of the preface is lost and left only in German. Edith Decker-Phillips, "Nam June Paik's Chinese Memories," in *We Are in Open Circuits*, 385.

[38] Ibid., 392-93.

cultural contexts he lived in as a global citizen but also to confront the linguistic condition of the

untranslatable and often illegible clash that shaped his artist persona as a global visionary.

Paik's wealthy family and their successful textile business (which eventually became one

of the first *chaebol*, large industrial conglomerates run by the owner's family members

distinctive to South Korea) provided him with a privileged cultural upbringing in Seoul in the

1930s and 1940s.[39] In his luxury family residence located at the city center, he had private piano

lessons, learned musical composition, and accessed popular culture from the West, mainly

through pre-1945 Japanese journals and prints.[40] Since the Japanese colonial administration

(which occupied the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945) banned using the Korean language in

public spaces, Paik lived as an involuntary bilingual from a young age.[41] In November 1949,

Paik's experience of being a foreigner began in Hong Kong, where he attended the Royden

School.[42] Although Paik moved back to Seoul a year later, he soon left his native country for

Japan due to the Korean War (1950–53). Settling in Kamakura near Tokyo, the soon-to-be artist

was provided with a then "high-tech" living environment equipped with a television and an 8mm

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[39] For details of Paik's family business, Taichang Textile Co., and its relationship to the history of modern Korean entrepreneurship, see Ki-Jin Cho, "Big Merchants in Seoul toward the End of the Yi Dynasty," reprinted in *The Electronic Super Highway: Travels with Nam June Paik*, by Nam June Paik (Cincinnati: Carl Solway Gallery, 1995), 3-7.

[40] Youngwoo Lee, "NJP: A Walk Through His Adolescent Years," 1994, in *The Electronic Super Highway*, 10.

In his recollection of his early exposure to Western media culture, Paik listed the names and titles he saw in monthly film magazines, such as Josef von Sternberg's 1930 romantic movie, *Morocco*, the French director Julien Duvivier's documentary photographs of *Un Carnet de Bal* (1937), Leopold Stokowski and Deanna Durbin's British-Austrian musical drama *Unfinished Symphony* (1934), and a Nazi propaganda film directed by Leni Riefenstahl*, Triumph of the Will* (1935). Nam June Paik, "Mediatique Memory," 1992, in *Du Cheval à Christo et Autres Ecrits*, 11.

[41] Paik, "Mediatique Memory," 9.

[42] John G. Hanhardt, *Nam June Paik* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1982), 11.

film camera.[43] After graduating from the University of Tokyo in 1956, where he majored in aesthetics and art history and wrote a thesis on the Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951), Paik went to West Germany to study electronic music.

From this formative period in West Germany onward, Paik's artistic practice oscillates among diverse genres (musical composition, performance, installation, and graphic art) and media (sound, embodied performance, robotics, TV, closed-circuit video, satellite, and laser). In Munich, Freiburg, and Cologne, Paik was able to absorb experimental music practices through a group of influential figures, American composer John Cage (1912–92), German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007), and multi-media artist Mary Bauermeister (1934–2019) among many others. As Paik's self-fashioning epithet "Yellow PERIL! C'est moi [Yellow PERIL! That's me]" alludes, his exotic, eccentric, and rebellious presence successfully positioned him in the vanguard of contemporary art primarily through Fluxus performances using his own and others' bodies.[44] The lifelong fellowship he formed in the six-year sojourn in Germany with a number of avant-garde artists (Cage, German artist Joseph Beuys (1921–86), and George Maciunas (1931–78), the founder of the Fluxus movement) played an instrumental role in his development of the lingoes of media technology and media as language.

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[43] Ken Hakuta, "My Uncle Nam June," in *Global Visionary*, 19.

[44] This epithet appeared in a pamphlet for his first exhibition in Germany in 1964. Jean-Paul Fargier, "The Yellow Peril and the White Wolf," in *Nam June Paik: Video Time, Video Space*, eds. Toni Stoos and Thomas Kellein (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1993), 102.

Korean art historian Youngna Kim reads Paik's radical music practices and Fluxus performances in the German period as a strategy to gain attention within the spectacular cultural context of European art by fashioning himself as a transnational other from the East. Youngna Kim, "Chogukjeok jeongcheseong mandeulgi: baengnamjungwa iuhwan" 초국적 정체성 만들기: 백남준과 이우환 [Constructing Transnational Identities: Paik Nam June and Lee Ufan], *Hanguk geunhyeondae misulsahak* 18 (2007): 211-14.

While staying in Tokyo for two years before relocating to New York City in 1964, Paik met Japanese engineer Shuya Abe (b.1932) and devoted himself to self-taught robotics engineering and electronic machinery.[45] This year-long experimentation resulted in his creating of a twenty-channel audio-controlled android, *Robot K-465* (1964), and the well-known pieces that used a new video display, through which he earned the sobriquet "the George Washington of video art" after he migrated to the U.S.[46] With the support of the Rockefeller Foundation and WGBH-TV in Boston, he invented the first Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer with Abe in 1969. Using a TV screen as an artist's "canvas" made it possible to draw new visual patterns and effects through manipulated electronic signals and electromagnetic stimulation.[47] Thereafter the synthesizer served as the vital implement for expanding Paik's video experiment to the monumental installations and live telecast practices that became his linguistic medium. From the late 1960s onward, New York's Lower Manhattan would be the central stage of Paik's life and artistic activity until he passed away in Miami Beach, Florida, in 2006.[48]

The Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer became the vehicle for the staging of aesthetic contacts among multiple language systems. As Hanhardt points out, the materials from the Paik Archive

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[45] For Paik's relationship with Abe and their collaborative process, see Paik, "M. Abe—Pour Moi, Le Plus Grand Médecin," 1991, in *Du Cheval à Christo et Autres Ecrits*, 34-37; Sang Ae Park, "Interview with Shuya Abe," 2008/2011, in *Nam June Paik Art Center Interviews: Shuya Abe and Jung Sung Lee*, ed. Sang Ae Park (Yongin: Nam June Paik Art Center, 2016), 6-23.

[46] The first piece made with the Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer, *Video Commune: Beatles from Beginning to End*, was aired via the WGBH TV network for four hours in 1970. Marina Isgro, "*Video Commune*: Nam June Paik at WGBH-TV, Boston," *Tate Papers* 32 (Autumn 2019), https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/32/video-commune-nam-june-paik (accessed December 15, 2021).
Also see David Ross, "Nam June Paik Videotapes 1966–1973," in *Videa 'n' Videology*, 83.

[47] Paik describes a TV screen as "a canvas." See Nam June Paik, "Versatile Color TV Synthesizer," 1969, in *Videa 'n' Videology*, 54.

[48] Paik acquired U.S. citizenship in 1977.

evidence the ways in which Paik envisioned and formed his attachment to multiple places and multiple languages that cannot be reduced or converted to or serve as equivalencies of one another.[49] One earlier example of Paik's polyglottic sensibility is found in his college notebook with a cover saying "Indian Art." Inside, the hand-written notes and nearly illegible doodles compound Korean, Chinese characters, Japanese, and English in one sentence and even one phrase.[50] In the course of crisscrossing from one language to another, every single language—and letter—he jotted down stands as such. Any clarity of communication is only obtained from the clash of languages that refuse to be translated into one another. Given this, I counter the mischaracterization of Paik as a translator by reading interplay of multiple languages in the pieces of writing and series of drawings mainly drawn from the Paik Archive to shed light on how he seized new communication technologies as his fundamental artistic idiom to perform his creative practice of the global on the post-translational ground.

Key to the Highway (Rosetta Stone) (1995) **[Figure 1.2]** epitomizes Paik's enthusiasm for electronic media, which he eventually adopted as his newest and ultimate language of the future. This print work is split by three horizontal panes: eight rows of hieroglyph-like symbols and icons (an automobile, a seated Buddha, a house, a TV, a heart, a landscape, a piano keyboard, a dollar sign, a clock, and a planet); an autobiography written in the six languages he uses (French, Korean, English, Chinese characters, German, and Japanese); and a group of still shots from his videotapes. Similar to Paik's pieces of writing consisting of different languages and multilingual signatures, the text of *Key to the Highway* is not clear to all of its viewer-readers. In particular,

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[49] John G. Hanhardt, "The Textual Worlds of Nam June Paik: The Time of Writing and Reading," in *We Are in Open Circuits*, 2.

[50] Nam June Paik, Hand-written Notebook: "Indian Art," n.d., Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 11, Folder 5).

the middle part demands a certain degree of fluency in all six languages to follow his narrative. Likewise, for the viewer-readers unfamiliar with Paik's other works or writing habits, the upper and the lower sections might be nothing but a cryptogram.

The way in which Paik drives his audience to read the unreadable is the language in which he is the most fluent. Building on that illegibility, he developed the space for collective feelings to understand ourselves as a community beyond language. This ostensible illegibility produces a linguistic fissure or what I call a *lacuna*. Paik used the artistic device of the *lacuna* to take his viewer-readers through the experience of being somewhat puzzled and even frustrated to another place, a site of generativity in which the circulation of new communication modes may be apprehended or sensed without leaning on conventional language systems. Lexically meaning a missing part in manuscripts, *lacuna* is my critical term to highlight Paik's distinctive conceptualization of the meeting place of languages beyond translation as an artistic resource to cultivate new media-enabled platforms of global interaction.

Another group of prints discloses how Paik experimented with language as an optical module or a vector that constructs an abstract color field on the television screen rather than a mere carrier of meanings. Possibly produced in preparation for the limited edition of a collotype print *Columbus: In Search of a New Tomorrow* (1992), a set of untitled test prints from the Paik Archive simulates a visual conversion from a graphic letter to a television, a medium regarded as synonymous with Paik and his art per se.[51] Through multiple stages of repetition and overlapping, a single letter—Chinese characters referring to dream (夢) **[Figures 1.3, 1.4]** or

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[51] Although SAAM's entry record system does not officially credit Paik as a creator of these prints due to the absence of an artist's signature, some online auction records indicate that this set was created for testing the final work. See, for example, http://www.artnet.com/artists/nam-june-paik/einzelblatt-aus-portfolio-columbus-a-KQhiIInL9kqW1XLKh6l_ow2 (accessed December 15, 2021).

color (色)—is interwoven into an intense web of pure pigments, redolent of an analog

television's calibration screen. It is also worth mentioning that Paik's list of the similarities

between art and technology includes the pairing of color TV and French painter Georges-Pierre

Seurat's (1859–91) celebrated pointillist technique for optical effect.[52] In the initial stage, Paik

packs a piece of paper with a matrix of hand-written letters in a full palette. Different colors are

applied to each stroke in some cases. Succeeding prints record the abstract transition of the letter

into lines, grids, and planes. What occupies the spaces between each character is the overlaid

graphic letters, which only remain as a trace of the repetitive acts of writing and printing. In this

course of an infinite reiteration of writing a letter and colored printing, the letter obtains an

alternative role as a unit to generate a new optical illusion. The fact that the letters of "dream"

and "color" make a foundation for the visualization of a TV interface in this series suggests how

Paik envisioned the communicative potential of the medium through his sharp-witted destruction

of the traditional tools of communication—written languages and the practices of writing and

printing.

2. The Random Access Aesthetic of Videory

The way Paik enlists multiple linguistic and cultural codes into a video language beyond

translation is on clear view in his most widely known single-channel video, *Global Groove*

(1973) **[Figure 1.5]**. Manipulated through electronic signals, diverse audiovisual materials fill

the 28-minute runtime of this videotape, which Paik fabricated at New York Public Television

Station WNET's Television Laboratory (TV Lab) with its head engineer and editor John Godfrey

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[52] Nam June Paik, "Norbert Wiener and Marshall McLuhan," *Institute of Contemporary Arts Bulletin*, (1967): 9, reprinted in *Videa 'n' Videology*, 27.

(b.1945) and which was first broadcast on Channel 13. The Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer enabled them to create a composition from seemingly disparate image-sound fragments, ranging from Mitch Ryder & the Detroit Wheels' upbeat rock music, a go-go dancing couple, American beat poet Allen Ginsberg's (1926–97) poem recital, the performance *TV Cello* (1971) by American cellist and avant-garde artist Charlotte Moorman (1933–91), a Korean fan dance, and a Japanese Pepsi-Cola commercial set to a Navajo woman's chanting and drumming.[53] The relayed footage does not rely on multiple stages of post-video editing but on an instant operation of the synthesizer in real-time. The operating artist or engineer plays a switcher, an input part of the synthesizer, as if it is a piano keyboard or a gaming console. In this synthesizing process, images on the TV screen-canvas stand as an image-in-itself. Through the medium of TV, accordingly, *Global Groove* showcases a nonlinear and incoherent blast of visual information and multisensory vibes that are randomly and immediately accessible from anywhere. In the meantime, the viewers encounter a sort of disruption between the segments and mélange of images, which mirror the look of a fleeting standstill screen when surfing channels with analog television. The feelings and gestures of the "groovin' together" from the disjunctive global languages and codes are most dramatically entwined in such moments of interstice in this video.

A year before the creation of *Global Groove*, Paik defined the word "history" as a post-event act of recording. For him, letter-based languages no longer fully satisfied our desire to record and share such an event as a collective memory. For him, video superseded the conventional language systems used to tell and write down such an event and eventually make it history. By stating "Now history is being recorded in image or video. Therefore from now on

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[53] For a detailed analysis of each segment, see Anja Osswald, "*Global Groove* Shot Analysis," in *Nam June Paik: Global Groove 2004*, by Nam June Paik (Berlin: Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin, 2004), 36-43.

there is no more 'History,' but only 'Imagery' or 'Videory,'" he took this moving image-based media technology as an integral system to appreciate, record, and remember every event of our lives—even transitory moments between each event.[54] Paik's neologism "videory" condenses his conviction that we all now have the means to make history regardless of our disparate linguistic habits and conditions. "Videory" does not require the middle process of translation and works without languages. He further called for a logical process that refashions each of us as a creator of "videory," not with existing language systems but with technology—a post-translational aesthetic of random access.

In an essay written for *Artforum*, "Random Access Information" (1980), Paik claimed that new communication technology can rebuild the mechanism of information production with artistic involvement in its recording and retrieving processes.[55] Many of his artistic practices project this vision of a more user-oriented creative ground that reutilizes already commonly distributed electronic media for entertainment such as radio, television, and video. First unveiled in Paik's historic 1963 exhibition "Exposition of Music—Electronic Television" at Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Germany, his participatory installation piece *Random Access* (1963) endows visitors with the agency to create sound by touching the audiotape strips pasted on the wall with the playback header extended from the tape recorder. Works of art here emerge as a democratic apparatus and an interactive platform through which information is disintegrated and recombined by the arbitrary intervention of the viewer.

The ways in which *Global Groove* arranges each sequence also reflect Paik's effort to deconstruct the one-way structure of "time-based information" transmitted via videotapes or TV

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[54] Nam June Paik, "Binghamton Letter," January 8, 1972, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 7, Folder 9).

[55] Nam June Paik, "Random Access Information," *Artforum* 19, no.1 (September 1980): 46-49.

broadcasts.[56] Positioned on the opposite end from "time-based information," what he calls "random access information," with the increased autonomy of the audience to structure information, invalidates the pecking order between different informative contents that define which is better or worse, higher or lower, and central or peripheral. In this respect, "random access information" offers a method and aesthetic to shape and transmit the global "imagery" or "videory" without counting on the existing structures of language and language translation that inevitably assume two hierarchal subject groups, such as literate/illiterate, mediating/mediated, and accessible/inaccessible.

To Paik, Cage symbolizes the figure who solves the problem of random access through his electronic music playable according to each performer's desired time, "either three seconds or 30 hours without a definite retrieval time (similar to the encyclopedia)."[57] Premiered by the American pianist David Tudor (1926–96) at Maverick Concert Hall in Woodstock, New York, in 1952, Cage's sensational composition *4'33"* embraces chance and indeterminacy in art creation. This piece encapsulates the Cagean aesthetic that any sound, even noise and silence, would be music. Cage prompted his audience to listen to sound not-in-play but still existing around them. Absence and hiatus are rematerialized as sites of action and reaction here. Based on the formal semblance that exhibits nothing, Cage once compared his composition with *White Paintings* (1951) by Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) and Paik's *Zen for Film* (1962–64); both have no images on canvas and screen but stand as the environment.[58] While *4'33"* plays the sound of the audience's present environment without any musical instruments for four minutes and thirty-

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[56] Ibid., 48.

[57] Ibid., 49.

[58] John Cage, "On Nam June Paik's 'Zen for Film' (1962–64)," in *Electronic Art III: PAIK-ABE Video Synthesizer with Charlotte Moorman* (New York: Galerie Bonino, 1971), n.p.

three seconds, *Zen for Film* screens a raw film reel, cleared of audiovisual content, which manifests cinema as a cinema in the ways we have understood the medium.[59] In Paik's installation, only dirt and light from a projector are cast onto the gallery wall so that the spectators are made attentive to their immediate surroundings, which used to be the fringe of their focus.

Borrowing from the title *Global Groove*, I recast the active verb "groove" to describe an alternative modality that generates and fills a furrow or a *lacuna*, giving viewers random access to the media contents and the broader world. A decade later, Paik's satellite telecasts further elaborated this task of reading such seemingly unfathomable, illegible space in Paik's multilingual writings and the momentary mixture of the video clips in *Global Groove* as a productive condition of global connection. One of the central goals he endeavored to achieve through satellite art is "how to play with improvisation, indeterminism, echoes, feedbacks, and empty spaces in the Cagean sense."[60] Paik believed that a simultaneous satellite broadcast could empower artists to activate such indefinite spaces as a new channel of global engagement.

On account of this, in what follows, I first explore how Paik reframed emerging media technologies, TV, and communication satellites as alternative visuals to existing language systems in terms of speech, body, and connectivity through a set of repetitive figurative signs found in his graphic drawings and prints. The subsequent sections then offer an in-depth reading of selected segments from his three satellite projects by examining the ways in which this new media-enabled communication mode fills a *lacuna* in global communication and enacts

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[59] For further discussion about *Zen for Film* in relation to Cage's and Rauschenberg's pieces, see Hanna B. Hölling, *Revisions: Zen for Film* (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2015), 32-44.

[60] Nam June Paik, "La Vie, Satellites, One Meeting—One Life," in *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation,* ed. John G. Hanhardt (Layton, UT: G.M. Smith, Peregrine Smith Books, in association with Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1986), 219.

collective engagement beyond geopolitical boundaries and linguistic barriers. Paralleled with his now-iconic term, "electronic superhighways" (also the title of his gigantic video installation in SAAM's collection, which pays homage to America), Paik's barely discussed three coinages with Chinese characters—*tenseijingo*, *furoshiki tenka*, and *innenbanri*—serve as my conceptual foundations for recuperating the other side of this history that reveals the transnational scope of his practice with global connectivity.

3. Televisual Language

Rendered in a rectangular box with a V-shaped antenna attached to the upper right corner, a simplified icon for television recurrently emerges in Paik's writings and artworks as early as 1970. Finished only in two strokes—one for a television body and the other for an antenna— *Untitled (Television)* (ca. 1970) **[Figure 1.6]** provides an archetype of this icon that leads to numerous variations thereafter. Subject to the contents of the body part, the variation is mainly classified into three types. The first group shows an amalgamation with a letter—mostly Chinese characters and English. A series of sketches from around 1970, titled *Cage TV*, in which Paik has drawn Cage's last name on the upper left side, exhibits one of the earliest examples.

Cage's name is especially meaningful to Paik. In his memorialization of Cage, written after the composer passed away in 1992, Paik says that his artistic practice is divided into before and after his first encounter with Cage in 1958.

> In 1962 I said to Allison Knowles: "My life started one evening in 1958 at Darmstadt. 1957 was B. C. (Before Cage). 1947 was B. C. 10–Plato lived in B. C. 2500, not in B. C. 500. What does A. D. means?"
> She said "A. D. is the abbreviation of After Death".
> World history started with the free deaths of three men.
> Socrates, Bo-i of China and Jesus.

In any case, for me, 1993 is 1 A. D.[61]

The name of Cage is indeed synonymous with the turning point in Paik's navigation of new artistic languages. Created about a year after the invention of the first Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer, the *Cage TV* series eloquently declares TV as Paik's newest medium. The characters merged with an icon-like drawing of a TV further hint at the conceptual lens through which Paik embraced television into his praxis.

For *Cage TV Sketch* (ca. 1970) **[Figure 1.7]**, Paik substitutes a television body on the bottom right with a Chinese character meaning a country (國). Another *Cage TV* from the same year embeds Japanese *kanji* (adopted logographic Chinese character), which has the same meaning but a different shape (国). In both cases, he used a square shape of a television body as part of these characters. Human (人) **[Figure 1.8]** and mind/heart (心) are other letters Paik adheres to his TV pictogram. Similar to the character of a country, Figure 1.8 can be read as the character of a prisoner or imprisonment (囚), which places a human inside a prison of a square. In this case, the name of Cage might be doubly resonant with this character, given that Paik collected several birdcages for artworks in a gesture of his admiration for the composer. [62] In either case, its succinct expression showing a medium (TV) and a message (one Chinese character) together reminds one of Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan's dictum, "the medium is the message" from his canonical work *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1962).[63] In his 1967 essay on communication arts and cybernetics, "Norbert Wiener and Marshall McLuhan," Paik locates Cage within this aesthetic genealogy of indeterminacy

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[61] Nam June Paik, "B. C. / A. D. John Cage," *World New Music Magazine* 3 (1993): 97.

[62] Hanhardt, *Nam June Paik: Global Visionary*, 166-67.

[63] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 9.

concerning the McLuhanian edict.[64] In that Paik places these TV icons side-by-side with the name of Cage, whom Paik deems the beginning of his art, these embedded letters conceptually proclaim his forthcoming practices with TV.

Motifs from nature, animals, architecture, instruments, and everyday objects occupy the space inside the rectangular television frame in the second group of Paik's TV icons, as the upper section of *Key to the Highway* exemplifies. Similar to the manipulated moving images of *Global Groove*, the TV screen exists here again as an artist's canvas on which anything can be drawn. Whereas the first group presents the kinds of broader messages his TV practice aims to offer, the second group identifies the specific contents through which Paik delivers those messages to his audience. For example, the moon is one of the most recurring motifs Paik combines with a TV icon and associates with his idea of media in general. An untitled graphic drawing he contributed to the sixth volume of *REAKTION* (1981), a German publication series containing original artworks, illustrates a pair of crescents—one inside a TV screen and the other in the sky.[65] Reminiscent of the title of his poetic installation with a dozen television sets, *Moon is the Oldest TV* (1965–92), this drawing indicates that Paik appropriates the moon as a storytelling symbol to manifest the universal potential of his own artistic medium, TV, which can appeal to a wider audience.

More predominant than the first two kinds in respect to quantity and flexibility, the last group of Paik's TV icons enlivens a television body as a human with a variety of facial expressions, from smiling to astonished to weeping **[Figure 1.9]**. Adding a speech bubble reading "H.E.L.P!!," Paik's TV icon also becomes the artist's alter ego who entreats support for

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[64] Paik, "Norbert Wiener and Marshall McLuhan," 26.

[65] Milan Mölzer ed., *REAKTION VI* (Düsseldorf: Verlaggalerie Leaman, 1981), n.p.

his works from an art critic, John J. O'Connor **[Figure 1.10]**, or a one-eyed Korean shaman with simple changes in the eye from a circle to a line. Another variation displays a set of this TV pictogram, replaced by conventional systems of alphabet-based communication languages, aligned on a hierographic plate in *Key to the Highway* or occupying a news board with other symbols in *Zenith,* from the *V-Idea, a priori* etching series (1984) **[Figure 1.11]**. In other examples, the individualized faces form a group whose arrangement echoes the ways in which a Chinese character arrays in a grid in *Columbus: In Search of a New Tomorrow* that simulates its visual conversion from a graphic letter to a television screen. Some of Paik's later works display almost compulsive repetitions of this TV icon with a face drawn on canvas, letters to his friends, and on the surface of various objects, such as TV consoles and Buddhist statues, often accompanied by his name in multiple writing systems. In this way, this television pictogram becomes the last member of the multilingual cluster of Paik's artist signatures.

Regarding the personification of TV icons, Paik's frequent references to McLuhan provide an additional lens through which to look at Paik's practices of TV and other up-to-date media technologies. Paik used to hand-write, type, or clip specific paragraphs excerpted from famous books or thinkers, sometimes indirectly from a collection of quotations, such as Bergen Evans's *Dictionary of Quotations*. McLuhan's *Understanding Media* is one of the sources Paik scrapped and collected along with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell (1903–50).[66] In "Norbert Wiener and Marshall McLuhan," Paik explains how McLuhan puts electronics in alignment with the human nervous system as Norbert Wiener's (1894–1964) cybernetics does.

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[66] Nam June Paik, A scrapped excerpt pasted on paper: "McLuhan Understanding Media," n.d., Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 12, Folder 16).

Paik possessed a 1978 edition of Bergen Evans's *Dictionary of Quotations*, which is in the library collection of the Paik Archive. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 29).

Presented on various occasions, including in his first anthology in 1974 and the commemorative lecture at the Kyoto Prize ceremony, Paik considered this essay as the conceptual foundation of his *oeuvre* on the relationship between art and communication.[67] The humanized pictogram of the TV intuitively visualizes McLuhan's sociological and psychological contemplation of mass media, which extends human abilities and senses.

Paik's engagement with McLuhan's notion that media are extensions of the body deeply affected his work, from his production of sketches of TVs with the character for human to his art practices and self-fashioning. His own corporeality became the key material of his bodily presentation of TV in varied circumstances after the mid-1970s. For instance, in the middle of *Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast* (1977), the opening performance for the Kassel Documenta 6, Paik crumpled his upper body into an empty TV cabinet and ate an apple **[Figure 1.12]**. His official photographs adopted the same visual strategy in that his body literally substitutes for a cathode-ray tube. For instance, on the cover of *ARTnews* for May 1982 **[Figure 1.13]**, he stares at the camera from the interior of the circled frame of a wooden television console. The additional photographs inside the magazine article also catch his playful interaction with a set of television frames.[68] Such calculated self-publicity that makes his body a part of the televisual apparatus is profoundly associated with how Paik negotiated his roles and positions within the electronically enlarged communities made possible by artificial satellites.

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[67] The 1998 Kyoto Prize Commemorative Lecture was held at the Kyoto International Conference Center, Kyoto, Japan, on November 11, 1998. For the event program and scripts of Paik's lecture, see https://www.kyotoprize.org/en/speech/the-1998-kyoto-prize/ (Accessed December 15, 2021).

[68] Paul Gardner, "Turning to Nam June Paik," *ARTnews* 81, no. 5 (May 1982): 64.

4. Celestial Contact: The Satellite Trilogy

Paik's second signature icon is a planet, which again consists of two strokes, a circle (rather than

a sphere) and a skewed orbit symbol. Akin to the TV pictogram, this planet icon commonly

engrafts specific faces and words. The dissimilarity between the two stems from the fact that the

latter exclusively belongs to the pieces related to his satellite broadcast trio in the mid-1980s—

Good Morning, Mr. Orwell (1984), *Bye Bye Kipling* (1986), and *Wrap Around the World* (1988).

Written after the successful launch of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, Paik's essay "Art & Satellite"

(1984) clarifies how he extends his TV canvas to the global to play with not just the disparate

and untranslatable but also the empty spaces and gaps, the glitches and errors that come in the

orchestration of a polyglottal conversational structure that assigns value to feedback and

indeterminacy:

> Satellite art in the superior sense does not merely transmit existing symphonies and operas
> to other lands. It must consider how to achieve a two-way connection between opposite
> sides of the earth; how to give a conversational structure to the art; how to master
> differences in time; how to play with improvisation, in-determinism, echo[e]s, feedbacks,
> and empty spaces in the [C]agean sense; and how to instantaneously manage the
> differences in culture, preconceptions, and commonsense that exist between various
> nations. Satellite art must make the most of these elements (for they can become strengths
> or weaknesses), creating a multitemporal, multispatial symphony.[69]

The satellite as art exemplifies for Paik the most epic, innovative, and even cost-effective tool for

fashioning humanity as one global commune.[70] Through the conception, planning, writing,

negotiation, enactment, and publication over five years from 1983 to 1988, Paik's satellite series

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[69] Nam June Paik, "Art & Satellite," in *Art for 25 Million People: Bon Jour, Monsieur Orwell*, by Nam June Paik (Berlin: Daadgalerie, 1984), Appendix 6, n.p. An earlier version of this essay was written in Japanese and translated into English by Yumiko Yamazaki. See Nam June Paik, *Namu Jun Paiku ten: video āto o chūshin ni* ナムジュン・パイク展: ヴィデオ・アートを中心に [Nam June Paik Exhibition: Mostly Video] (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1984), 12-14.

[70] Nam June Paik, "Tenseijingo" 天星人語 [The Languages of the Alien Bodies], in *SAT-ART III: Nam June Paik*, by Nam June Paik (Tokyo: Sony, 1988), 6-7.

established its unique practical underpinnings: transnational experiments, trans-professional

collaboration, and the shaping of collective spectatorship. This section provides an overview of

the series by concentrating on how Paik employed the planet icon to address the shared goal and

geographic scope of the three satellite projects.

In a 1975 interview with Irmelin Lebeer, Paik defines *Global Groove* as "a global music

festival, a sort of imaginary video landscape that foresees what can happen when countries all

over the world are connected to each other via cable TV."[71] It was a "publicly accessible non-

military satellite" that propelled him to take a step forward in making "a sort of imaginary video

landscape" happen.[72] Two years after this interview, he participated in the first artist's live

telecast transmitted via satellite on June 24, 1977, as a part of *Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast*.

His Fluxus-spirited actions, joined by collaborative works with Moorman (*TV Bra*, *TV Cello*, and

TV Bed), comprised the first program of the 30-minute show. Beuys's performance in Kassel and

The Last Nine Minutes by American visual artist Douglas Davis (1933–2014) in Caracas,

Venezuela, followed Paik and Moorman's segment. [73] Undoubtedly, this collaboration gave

practical momentum to Paik to develop his video practices beyond their geography-defying

scale. One main limitation he found in *Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast*, nevertheless, resulted

from its one-way mechanism due to financial issues, not technological ones.[74] In "Art &

Satellite," by referencing the French mathematician Henri Poincaré's (1854–1912)

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[71] Nam June Paik, "Marcel Duchamp n'a pas Pensé a la Vidéo: Entretien avec Irmeline Lebeer (Bochum, 16, décembre 1974)," 1974, in *Du Cheval à Christo et Autres Ecrits*, 135.

[72] Paik, "Tenseijingo," 7.

[73] Charlotte Moorman is perhaps the most well-known of Paik's collaborators. Beginning with their joint performance of Stockhausen's *Originale* (1961) at the 2nd Annual New York Avant Garde Festival in 1964, Paik maintained nearly 30 years of artistic camaraderie with Moorman.

[74] Paik, "Art & Satellite."

commandment to discover noble relationships from already extant things, Paik asserts that a two-way satellite will play a decisive role in rebuilding "human Videosphere."[75] In short, the principle of two-way or even multilateral communication constructs a fundamental condition that determines the scope of his forthcoming project with a satellite.

First proposed concretely in February 1981 and planned to be aired on May 5, 1982, but never realized, *Brandenburg Concerto No. 7* is a satellite-enabled transatlantic piano duet that was supposed to link Paik in New York to Beuys in Berlin, Germany.[76] As "the first trail on this planet," to use Paik's description, this project sought to give absolute freedom to each artist and the hosting TV stations—New York's WNET/13 TV and West German Network 3 (Westdeutscher Rundfunk 3, WDR) in Cologne—to structure different versions by combining live and prerecorded programs.[77] In artistically repurposing an intercontinental satellite initially devised for military purposes during the Cold War, the project heralded the potential of random access aesthetics to produce a non-hierarchical, non-sequential, and non-totalitarian meeting between sites and across continents. The satellite trilogy Paik would finally actualize two years later bespeaks his endeavor to dismantle historical, geopolitical, and cultural boundaries that bring about unnecessary tension and division and to redefine us as one collective entity that belongs to one planet.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Nam June Paik, "Sattelite Piano Duette Beuys-Paik," February 1981, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 1); Nam June Paik, "Notes by Nam June Paik: Brandenberg Concerto No. 7," September 22, 1981, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 1). Note that the grammatical errors and misspellings in the titles follow the original state of the documents.

[77] Paik, "Sattelite Piano Duette Beuys-Paik," 1.

4.1. *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*

Set for New Year's Day in 1984, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* was a one-hour live telecast,

simultaneously transmitted through public television networks in the U.S. and France via the

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)'s New York flagship station WNET/13 TV at noon and FR3

(France 3) in Paris at 6 p.m. Due to the time difference, the New York version was aired in Korea

at 2 a.m. on January 2 via the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS). According to Paik's own

compiled records, between 26 and 33 million people around the globe watched this program—

either live or recorded—across the U.S., Canada, Korea, Japan, France, West Germany, Mexico,

and Brazil.[78] At the central control room in the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Paik connected

the artists on both shores of the Atlantic via the satellite Bright Star by transforming a variety of

live performances, merging them with premade video footage and computer graphics. As a

result, the audience enjoyed a TV collage of incessantly split, superimposed, faded, zoomed in

and out, and dissolved images and sounds instead of the conventional style of storytelling-

oriented TV programs.

Representing New York and Paris respectively, the American journalist George Plimpton

(1927–2003) and the French actor and writer Claude Villers (b.1944) co-hosted *Good Morning,*

Mr. Orwell, which "sandwiched serious and popular culture."[79] Some works were specially

created for this occasion by artists across diverse genres, professions, and generations. The cast

from New York included Cage with Japanese musicians Takehisa Kosugi (1938–2018) and

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[78] WNET's Channel 13 and CBC Toronto reprised the New York version at 11 p.m. on January 2. The
Paris version was also telecast through WDR III, NDR III, Sender Freies Berlin, and Radio Bremen. The
post-edited version with shortened run time (30–35 minutes) was planned to be broadcast in Japan,
Mexico, and Brazil in November and December 1984. Nam June Paik, *Art for 25 Million People*, n.p.

[79] Nam June Paik, "Reflections on 'Good Morning, Mr Orwell,'" 1984, ed. and trans. Mitch Belgin, Maria
Galison, and Barbara Osborn, in *Art for 25 Million People*, Appendix 4, n.p.

Yasunao Tone (b.1935); American avant-garde dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham

(1919–2009); Anderson and the English singer-songwriter and the lead vocalist of Genesis, Peter

Gabriel (b.1950); Ginsberg with Peter Orlovsky (1933–2010), Steven Taylor (b.1955), and

Arthur Russell (1951–92); American television writer Mitchell Kriegman (b.1952); British pop

band Thompson Twins; and Moorman. American new wave band Oingo Boingo performed their

single "Wake Up! (It's 1984)" in San Francisco.

A wide array of artists appeared on the French side, including Beuys; French rock musician

Sapho (b.1950); French avant-garde artists Ben Vautier (b.1935) and Robert Combas (b.1957);

fireworks performer Pierre Alain Hubert (b.1944); French contemporary band assemble Urban

Sax; American comedian Leslie Fuller; and the Studio Bercot, a fashion design institute in Paris.

Paik orchestrated live performances by these contributors with pre-recorded videos: Yves

Montand (1921–91)'s tap dance; interlude comedy clips "Big Brother" played by American actor

Teddy Dibble; Dean Winkler and John Sanborn's (b.1954) computer graphic video of

mathematical landscape, *Act III* (1983), with a soundtrack by American composer Philip Glass

(b.1937); break dancing footage provided by Yuki Watanabe and Sanborn; and recorded images

of Buddhist sculptures.

Cologne's public-broadcasting WDR 3 also contributed films of Salvador Dali's (1904–89)

interview in front of an iconic portraiture of Mao Zedong (1893–1976), Argentine composer

Astor Pantaleón Piazzola's (1921–92) sound performance, and a narration piece by Argentine-

German composer Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008). While based on Paik's scenario, the nature of

live broadcasting pushed both the New York and Paris stations to manage the content differently

in terms of the order or duration of each segment. As underlined in his proposal for *Brandenburg

Concerto No. 7*, such an enhanced level of autonomy ensured in live broadcasting was one of

Paik's answers, at the present time of 1984, to Orwell's dystopian adumbration of the electronic media-encroached future through the new dimension of artistic repurposing of technology.

A publicity postcard for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* **[Figure 1.14]** demonstrates how Paik employed both TV and planet icons as his unique visual lingoes to highlight the project's transatlantic connectivity and two-way communicability. In the upper middle section, he drew a planet whose orbit links to the antennas of two television faces in the bottom, one for New York and the other for Paris. The Orwellian number-cum-production year of the work, '84, is inscribed on the planet's body. With a TV face for San Francisco added on the upper left side, the same graphic scheme embellishes the first scene of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, which features the New York host Plimpton speaking from the WNET/13 TV studio **[Figure 1.15]**. In another sketch included in the booklet for a limited VHS set, *SAT-ART III: Nam June Paik* (1988) **[Figure 1.16]**, a black-and-white photograph of Orwell's face is superimposed on a planet that hovers over a net of the four main participating cities—New York represented by the World Trade Center, Paris by the Eiffel Tower, and the handwritings of "Seoul" and "Cologne."

Paik chose the shape of the planet, not a satellite, as the symbol of his transcontinental network because it is not only more recognizable and simpler to draw, but it also has an affinity to a star in two aspects. First, the name of the satellite used for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* is Bright Star. Second, most of its contributing performers, particularly Cage, Beuys, Anderson, Gabriel, and Cunningham, were already well-known celebrities in their fields. In that sense, Paik called them "earthly" stars, who could finally convene on the same TV stage/screen with the support of satellite technology.

> 'Good Morning, Mr. Orwell' of New Year's Day, 1984, produced all kinds of feedback. Cage and Beuys are friends, but they have never performed together, Beuys and Ginsberg are two artists who have many things in common (active political involvement, heated performance, complete anti-nuclear naturalism, similar age, romanticism), but have never

met. The heavenly stars (Mars, Saturn, Altair, Vega, etc.) meet periodically, but the earthly ones do so very rarely. When I ponder what mysteries the encounter with other people holds for our insubstantial lives, I feel it is a terrible shame that great geniuses may pass their prime without ever meeting. And even when such encounters have actually taken place (for example, Cage and McLuhan; Cage and Buckminster Fuller), no camera has recorded the event. What a loss for the history of human civilization! In 1963, French television recorded a meeting between Edgar Varèse and Marcel Duchamp. Now that both of these giants have passed away, I find it a stirring moment no matter how many times I watch it. The satellite will no doubt amplify these mysteries of encounters by geometric progression. …[80]

As Paik underlined in his self-reflection on the show described above, the satellite telecast not only radically abridged the physical distance between his all-stars, but it also invited the TV audience, some of whom lived far from global art centers such as New York and Paris, to join "a big cultural up" in the comfort of their living rooms in Lexington, Kentucky.[81] Paik's *1984 Invaders* from the *V-Idea, a priori* (1984) etching series **[Figure 1.17]** straightforwardly visualizes the across-the-board power of his satellite events to reach audiences even in front of their home televisions. The close-up negative stills from the *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* performance are patched to seven planets/stars floating in the dark universe: (from the upper right side, clockwise) Moorman playing *TV Cello*; Cage with his cactus instrument; Anderson and Gabriel performing their duet song, "This is the Picture (Excellent Birds)"; Ginsberg and his partner Orlovsky; and Cunningham performing "Space Feedback." By christening his collaborators as "invaders" who concurrently fly up to the galaxy and to global viewers via satellite, Paik's cluster of anthropomorphized planets showcases the expanded boundaries of our habitual territories and communities.

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[80] Paik, "Art & Satellite."

[81] Paik, "Reflections on 'Good Morning, Mr Orwell.'"

4.2. *Bye Bye Kipling*

The same visual rhetoric of connection in the cosmos permeates the second of Paik's satellite

series, *Bye Bye Kipling*. A sketch from the *SAT-ART III* booklet illustrates the close-up face of the

English poet Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) that occupies the round body of a planet

[Figure 1.18]. Above the planet of Kipling's face with the work's title, two simply outlined

profiles face each other. Architectures surrounding the profiles represent the three countries

(cities) participating in *Bye Bye Kipling*—on the left side, Seoul with the Great South Gate and

Tokyo with a Shinto shrine gate, and New York with the Empire State Building on the right. The

second sequence **[Figure 1.19]** adopts the same pictorial arrangement with the poet's faces

pictured in multiple ways and substitutes the title with a quote from his century-old poem, *The

Ballad of East and West* (1889). By invalidating its famed line, "O, East is East, and West is

West, and never the twain shall meet," Paik shifted his transcontinental performing stage from

the Atlantic to the Pacific.[82]

Subtitled "three by three," one of the earlier proposals for *Bye Bye Kipling* discloses that

Paik originally envisioned the project as enfolding three countries each from the East (mainland

China, Korea, and Japan) and the West (the U.S., West Germany, and France or England).[83] He

was also eager to include India as a main contributor until three months before the event day.[84]

Unfortunately, this ambitious plan never materialized, and less than half remained as primary

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[82] In a seven-page proposal initially written in Japanese and addressed to NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, Japan Broadcasting Corporation) Department of International Relations' Mr. Toshio Iwasaki, Paik suggests "Pacific Basin Festival" as a secondary title for *Bye Bye Kipling*. Nam June Paik, "Proposal for *Bye Bye Kipling*," January 5, 1986, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 14).

[83] Nam June Paik, "art satellite project 1986 september," July 17, 1984, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 14).

[84] Carol Brandenburg, "Letter to Dr. Narayana Menon," July 15, 1986, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 13).

participants—the U.S., Korea, and Japan. However, such a reduced scale for the program resulted in the strengthening of his storytelling of the transpacific. Two words on the title page of *Bye Bye Kipling*—East in Chinese writing (東) and West in Roman letters—condense the premise of such jovial conciliation through his TV icons whose antennas interlock to shape a star **[Figure 1.20]**. The white-colored logo floats up in the blue sky with a black artificial satellite, which intermittently appears throughout the show as a means of enhancing the lively ambiance. This design strategy visually conveys the message of this project that new technology enables us to reperceive collectivity beyond spatiotemporal distance.

The 90-minute broadcast of *Bye Bye Kipling* was scheduled for October 4, 1986 (9:30 to 10:30 p.m. EST) so that the show could incorporate live scenes from the men's marathon relay of the 10th Asian Games held in Seoul. Three hours after the live transmission in New York via WNET/13 TV, Japan's Asahi National Broadcasting Co., LDT. (TV Asahi) aired the recorded version on October 5 (1:00 to 2:00 p.m. JST). In Korea, KBS aired the dubbed edition aired four days later on October 9 (9:40 to 11:30 p.m. KST). This time, Paik managed the program with TV Asahi in the Arc Hills Plaza, a then newly built commercial complex located in Tokyo's Roppongi area. Together with the Oscar-winning Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto (b.1952) in the Arc Hills Plaza outdoor stage, American comedian Dick Cavett (b.1936) took the role of the main host at the 4D nightclub in New York.

The press release describes *Bye Bye Kipling* as "an art/sports cocktail, in which live sports and live art chase each other and culminate in a simultaneous climax."[85] The inclusion of sports sections is unquestionably one of the crucial alterations from *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*. Much

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[85] Nam June Paik, "Press Release for *Bye Bye Kipling*," September 8, 1986, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 10).

more intense layers of vibrancy, diversity, and randomness, originated from simultaneous live satellite broadcasting, were added to the piece even with certain levels of distractedness. Kathrine Switzer (b.1947), the first woman to run the Boston Marathon, and American national sprint team coach Fred Thompson (1933–2019) served as the double casters for the men's marathon of the Asian Games with the dynamic Seoul cityscape as the backdrop. Composed with the inspiration from Indian music, the Philip Glass Ensemble's "Rubric" (1982) provided magnificent background music up until the marathon's climax. Hawaiian-born Japanese-Samoan sumo wrestler Yasokichi Konishiki (b.1963) joined the Arc Hills Plaza stage in order to introduce sumo to TV viewers across the Pacific. The other sports components covered in *Bye Bye Kipling* include excerpts from the documentary on the Elephant Festival in Thailand shot by American TV producer Skip Blumberg (b.1946) and the video on a land diving in Papua New Guinea, directed by Robert Gardner (1925–2014).

For the music ingredients for Paik's "art/sports cocktail," which opened with the Beatles' "Come Together," American rock musician Lou Reed Band's three songs ("Sweet Jane," "The Original Wrapper," and "Video Violence"), Byungki Hwang's (1936–2018) *gayageum* (Korean string instrument) solo with *janggu* (Korean drum) played by Sang-won Park (b.1950), American musician David van Tieghem's (b.1955) percussion sound with everyday objects, a video clip from Moorman's *TV Cello*, Tudor's electronic music, and avant-garde sound by Japanese musicians Toshi Ichiyanagi (b.1933) and Yuji Takahashi (b.1938) provided various live works from New York. The Alvin Ailey Repertory Dance Ensemble, a Korean priest dance led by Sun-Ock Lee (b.1943), and the New York-based theatre company The Living Theatre added the dance ingredients to the show. The Tokyo programs ranged from Sakamoto's piano performance, Japanese *butoh* dance troupe Sankai Juku, and Korean traditional percussion music *samul nori*,

to the saxophone performance by Japanese avant-garde jazz musician Toshinori Kondo (1948–

2020). "Han River Song" by the renowned Korean folk singer Young-im Kim (b.1953) and KBS

Symphony Orchestra's "Beethoven Violin Concerto in D Major" were pre-recorded in Seoul as

other musical additions.

The avant-garde art list of *Bye Bye Kipling* consisted of American artist Keith Haring's

(1958–90) graffiti performances in the New York City metro stations, Paik's TV robots, Korean

screen paintings created by four painters—Paik, Ufan Lee (b.1936), Tschang-yeul Kim (1929–

2021), and Seo-bo Park (b.1931)—, the first Avant-garde festival at Battanggol Gallery in Seoul,

Winkler's 3D animation *Celerity*, a clip from Douglas Davis's *Participation TV* (1977), and a

studio performance by three Japanese artists—Toshimitsu Imai (1928–2002), Aiko Miyawaki

(1929–2014), and Yasuaki Shimizu (b.1954). Two contributors to *the New Yorker*, Roger Angell

(b.1920) and Tomkins's colloquy on sports and art was a kind of second season of Dali's

narration in *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*.[86]

Moreover, a significant portion of the telecast was devoted to presenting traditional and

contemporary cultural fragments of the East: a live demonstration of Korean shamanistic sorcery

on the 4D stage; Blumberg's documentary film, *Seoul Report*; video footage of Korean

traditional performances and folk games, such as *nongak* (farmers' performance), *gossaum nori*

(loop fight), *neolttwigi* (see-saw game), and women's fan dance; videos on Japanese cultures

(Sado Island drummers, Japanese *obon* dance, and Mount Fuji scenery) created by Japanese

video artist Shigeko Kubota (1937–2015); and Paik's video segment on a Japanese temple,

Eiheiji. Lastly, Kit Fitzgerald (b.1953) and Paul Garrin's (b.1957) video *Adelic Penguins* (1986),

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[86] The KBS version replaced Angell and Tomkins's sequence with the conversation between two famed Korean abstract painters, Ufan Lee and Tschang-yeul Kim. "Que Sheet for *Bye Bye Kipling*," 1986. The Collection of Dong-Sik Lee.

and a video by American media artist Betsy Connors (b.1950), *Doll Animation*, further enriched the audiovisual dynamics of the screen composition.[87] The radical liquidation of the edges between high art/pop culture and art/everyday rituals in *Bye Bye Kipling* proclaims that various genres such as music, dance, theatre, literature, fashion, and fine art are assembled in one medium of television.

As an auxiliary device that augments the new experience of simultaneous spectatorship facilitated by telecommunication technology, Paik interspersed satellite experiments that use a split screen feature. The satellite experiments reflect his eagerness to demonstrate that his satellite art provides unusual visuals to TV audiences who expect to watch entertainment rather than fine art. There are two types of these experiments with a satellite. First, several pairs of artists standing on stage in New York and Tokyo meet each other for the first time. For instance, the "Satellite Toast" scene shows the hosts of two main stations, Cavett and Sakamoto, celebrating their first meeting over satellite by making a toast with a beer glass. Then, Haring in New York salutes Tokyo's Issey Miyake (b.1938), the internationally renowned Japanese fashion designer who created stage costumes for Sankai Juku and the Alvin Ailey Repertory Dance Ensemble. Also, French-born American sculptor Arman (1928–2005) and Arata Isozaki (b.1931), the Japanese architect of New York's Palladium Nightclub, chat over how their works have something in common.

In the second type of satellite experiment, the bisected screen makes one unified visual image. Paik intended to reveal how the new technology reconfigures spatiotemporal distance

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[87] For Blumberg's memory of working as a staff of *Bye Bye Kipling* and his business trip to Seoul and Tokyo for this project, Skip Blumberg, "Baibaikippurin gu no seisaku no-to バイ・バイ・キップリン ぐの制作ノート [Bye Bye Kipling Production Note]," in *Asatte raito: ikarusu = fenikkusu* あさってラ イト *: Icarus = Phoenix* [Tomorrow Light: Icarus = Phoenix], eds. Nam June Paik and Junji Ito (Tokyo: Parco Publishing, 1988), 102.

through a strip dance and twins' trick sequences. In the former, a Japanese dancer (Kaoru) on the right side takes off her dress and throws it to an American dancer (Robin Byrd) on the right, who then puts on the dress as if they physically exist right next to each other. In the latter, twin sisters (Ellen Kahn and Lynda Kahn) assist Cavett and Sakamoto to exchange their gifts, as if one woman is teleported via a satellite. If Cavett asks Ellen in New York to deliver a New York apple to Sakamoto, she walks toward his side. Then, Lynda appears on Tokyo's screen and hands over an apple to Sakamoto. They all pretend that Lynda is Ellen, who arrived in Tokyo with Cavett's apple in a mere second. Despite its crudeness due to the time delay in satellite transmission, these split screen experimentations convey Paik's coherent message of how dynamic our connection will be in the future and how such transformation affects the ways we contextualize and sense the world.

4.3. *Wrap Around the World*

A drawing for the finale of Paik's satellite triad in the *SAT-ART III* booklet **[Figure 1.21]** depicts an even more abstract space than that in the two preceding ones. Dispossessed of markers of the participating cities and the spectacular lineup of artists, only a group of planet-stars occupies the empty space. The planet is combined with three iconic figures: the Russian communist revolutionary Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) in the top right, the first Premier of the People's Republic of China Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) in the middle left, and Hodori, the tiger mascot of the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games, with a pair of birds in the bottom right. The most prominent icon in the middle has an inscribed English word, "wrap," which designates the title and theme of this project, *Wrap Around the World*, aired on September 10, 1988 (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. EST).

In one of its earlier proposals for this piece, "Chip Olympics," Paik wrote, "global networking is what the show is all about."[88] This idea of networking at the global level is also visually reflected in this drawing and the title animation at the beginning of the *Wrap Around the World* live show. This is done through the transition from an individual star-planet to one globe. Coupled with a voiceover introducing ten collaborating TV stations in Asia, the Americas, and Europe, the video fragments transmitted from each station were showcased as mini screens that drift about the air with Earth, viewed from outer space **[Figure 1.22]**. Shortly after the presentation of the main hosts—*Saturday Night Live Show* crewmembers Al Franken (b.1951) and Tom Davis (1952–2012)—a perforated line connects ten participating cities on a world map, from New York, Beijing, Rio de Janeiro, Leningrad (former Saint Petersburg), Jerusalem, Ireland (County Kildare), Seoul, Madrid, Tokyo, to Bonn **[Figure 1.23]**. Once the connection is completed, the yellow-colored world map on a blue background gyrates and morphs into a globe. The globe then becomes the backdrop for the English title of the show **[Figure 1.24]**.[89]

Compared to the two earlier programs, *Wrap Around the World* dwells on a more organized structure and storyline, partly grounded in a script written by Franken and Tom Davis—the latter takes the role of an alien character, Dr. Mobius, from an imaginary external planet Krylon. Situated inside Dr. Mobius's spacecraft **[Figure 1.25]** that hovers a quarter mile above the WNET/13 TV building in Manhattan, Franken persuades Dr. Mobius not to invade Earth by showing him a variety of global arts and sports programs which demonstrate the strength of

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[88] Nam June Paik, "Chip Olympics [Wrap Around the World]," c. 1988, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 9, Folder 1), 2.

[89] The sequence for the transition from a world map to the title logo does not appear in the official single-channel version of *Wrap Around the World*, distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York.

humankind. In between the performance segments, they also have conversations with female reporters from participating cities.

While most participating TV stations presented live performances, some contributed pre-recorded videos of sporting events, festivals, and landscapes specific to their countries. In the New York studio, English singer-songwriter David Bowie (1947–2016) sang a song, "Look Back in Anger," while dancing with Louise Lecavalier (b.1958), the leading dancer of the Canadian contemporary dance troupe, La La La Human Steps. KBS TV announcer Myong-Hee Cha introduced the Seoul Olympics to Dr. Mobius, with greetings from the national athletes assembled in the Olympics Athletes' Village in Seoul. Bonn broadcast a concert by German punk rock band Die Toten Hosen in front of Ludwig van Beethoven's house. Scenes from Rio de Janeiro included Mardi Gras and samba dancers, followed by Korean peasant band Durae Pae's percussion music performance with a group of female *seol jango* (Korean traditional drum dance) performers in the ramp-core at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA, formerly the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea), in Gwacheon. Durae Pae performed by encircling Paik's splendid TV tower, *The More, The Better* (1988) **[Figure 1.26]**, installed at MMCA. He also presented his shamanistic performance with *TV Candle* at the WNET/13 TV studio, followed by video clips from *Wedding of Statue of Liberty* project of Barcelona-born artist Antoni Miralda (b.1942) and Tudor's performance of "Rainforest" (1973). At the Billy Rose Sculpture Garden in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, the Tel-Aviv-based Kol Demama Dance Company performed choreography to Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." Ireland prepared a rain-drenched scene of a motor race in the Modelo Race Track in County Kildare. In Tokyo, after his conversation with New York's Bowie on a split

screen, Sakamoto played electric piano harmonized with three Okinawan female instrumentalists for Cunningham's solo dance, under the title of "Transpacific Duet."

As the illustration with Lenin's and Zhou Enlai's faces indicates, the participation from the communist bloc (the Soviet Union and the Republic of China) heightened the reconciliatory and festive ambiance for global connection beyond the sense of cultural incompatibility and ideological conflict in Paik's final satellite event. While Leningrad transmitted the avant-garde pianist Sergey Kuryokhin's (1954–96) jazz music with traditional Russian dancers and a mixed chorus, the collaboration of the Sino-foreign rock band Ado and singer-songwriter Cui Jian (b.1961) was aired from Beijing along with a live martial arts show. In order to make the show more dynamic, live performances were mixed with diverse video footage, such as the Vienna Jazz Orchestra playing blues on the site of Johannes Brahms's house in Hamburg, "Rock Me Amadeus" (1985) by Austrian musician Falco (1957–98), a fan dance by Little Angels Children's dance troupe in Seoul, and Italian electronic duo Krisma's music video "Water" (1982) and their reenactment of Fluxus events. Some video clips of Japanese performance excerpted from *Bye Bye Kipling* and Paik's previous videotapes and TV robots were also added with a brief response from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)'s international control room in London.

In its dense interlacing of disparate components through computer graphic effects and real-time access to a communications satellite, Paik's satellite trilogy restructured the existing system of local art and culture, representing these various artistic practices as novel kinds of shared commodities for a global TV audience. At the same time, the fact that his satellite practice produced a global community out of the highly localized elements resonates with social-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's notion of "virtual neighborhoods."[90] For Appadurai, paralleled

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[90] Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 178-99.

with mass migration, electronic media plays a dominant role in situating modern cultural politics in global flows. He insists that "global production of locality" happens as transnational movements of people, goods, and knowledge become imaginative resources for creating new sorts of relational contexts and social forms. In a similar vein, the executive producer of Paik's satellite series Carol Brandenburg recollects, "For me, that was the true and lasting significance of WRAP AROUND THE WORLD: using technology to create human interaction that would have been unthinkable just a few short years ago."[91] Paik's satellite experiments reflect the optimistic expectations and aspirations for a collective entity and transnational future that began to emerge in the virtual global world of the 1980s. Rather than pursuing a perfect answer, he posed a pressing question, asking how we can build together a communication model beyond the existing systems of language and spatiotemporal obstacles disconnecting global subjects. In this satellite series, such languages of the future are configured as a mere metaphor in some scenes or as more performative gestures in others. By examining selected segments from the series in detail, the following sections scrutinize such divergent modalities of global interaction that emphasize three key elements—the fragility of verbal language, bodies in transmission, and the sense of belonging created at a distance.

4.4. Video Documents of the Satellite Trilogy

Before the detailed reading of the selected segments, it is necessary to clarify my reference resources, as there are a number of different versions of Paik's satellite videotapes in terms of running time and sequence arrangement.

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[91] Carol Brandenburg, "Thoughts on 'Wrap Around the World,'" in *SAT-ART III*, 25.

At least four editions of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* currently remain: New York live, Paris live, revised edition, and post-production.[92] Approximately 60-minute of two live versions designate the live or recorded satellite broadcasts produced in New York and Paris and aired from each broadcasting station. These versions are slightly different from each other in terms of the organization of sequences, screen composition, and the highlighted sections. After the live broadcast on January 1, 1984, Paik created the revised version (48:15 minutes) with his then assistant Paul Garrin. Paik and Garrin rearranged the order and changed the length of the selected live sources so that the completed work better corresponds to Paik's initial conception of the project.[93] A more condensed post-production version (38 minutes) portrays additional special effects and a new sequence flow, altered from the live and revised editions. Most of Paik's video works are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), a nonprofit art organization in New York. And EAI records and circulates the post-production version of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* as its official single-channel video format, which credits Skip Blumberg as its editor.[94]

In the cases of *Bye Bye Kipling* and *Wrap Around the World*, most participating local TV stations telecast a single version. A notable exception is found in KBS's Korean-dubbed edition, which offered commentary on the theme at the show's beginning and embedded explanatory

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[92] The archivist of the Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives, Sang Ae Park analyzes every frame of the four versions of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, and the live version of both *Bye Bye Kipling* and *Wrap Around the World* in her bilingual texts. Sang Ae Park, "Video Tape Analysis: *Good Morning Mr. Orwell*," in *Paik-Orwell Club: Warez Academy*, eds. Seong Eun Kim and Sang Ae Park (Yongin: Nam June Paik Art Center, 2014), 172-239; Sang Ae Park, "Video Tape Analysis 1: *Bye Bye Kipling*," in *Reanimating Nam June Paik*, ed. Jinsuk Suh (Yongin: Nam June Paik Art Center, 2016), 200-35; Sang Ae Park, "Video Tape Analysis 2: *Wrap Around the World*," in *Reanimating Nam June Paik*, 236-63.

Park classifies "post-production" based on the transcription of the original videotape cases housed in the Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. Sang Ae Park, Email interview with the author, April 1, 2020.

[93] The revised version of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* is in the collections of both SAAM's Paik Archive and the Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives, Yongin, South Korea.

[94] See the *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* page on the Electronic Arts Intermix website, https://www.eai.org/titles/good-morning-mr-orwell (accessed December 15, 2021).

captions. In the KBS version of *Bye Bye Kipling*, the dialogue between two American writers (Angell and Tomkins) is replaced with one between Korean artists (Ufan Lee and Tschang-yeul Kim). A new sequence (Falco's "Rock Me Amadeus") is added to the KBS version of *Wrap Around the World*. For the distribution of the last two projects in a single-channel video format, EAI uses post-production editions that are considerably shorter than the 90-minute live versions: *Bye Bye Kipling* is 30:32 minutes and *Wrap Around the World* is 47 minutes. Blumberg is credited as editor of these official single-channel videos.[95]

In my analysis, the sequences refer to the ones from the EAI-distributed versions unless otherwise noted. Still, I draw upon the live versions, the KBS editions, and the full event scripts to supplement the omitted or abbreviated parts in the EAI-distributed versions when necessary.[96]

5. From Newspeak to *Tenseijingo*

There was no more proper topic than Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* for Paik to embark on his historic expedition with a satellite, as the novel and Paik's work are both about "global networking." Paik's space opera trilogy summons *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in several respects. For example, the notorious character Big Brother literally takes part in *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, through a one-person farce performed by Dibble, most of which focuses on the absurdity of his

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[95] See the pages of *Bye Bye Kipling* and *Wrap Around the World* on the Electronic Arts Intermix website, https://www.eai.org/titles/bye-bye-kipling; https://www.eai.org/titles/wrap-around-the-world (accessed December 15, 2021).

[96] I consulted the live versions of three satellite programs, KBS editions of *Bye Bye Kipling*, and *Wrap Around the World* at the Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. Dong-Sik Lee, who was the executive producer of KBS for the first two satellite projects, provided me with copies of a partial script of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* and two cue sheets of *Bye Bye Kipling*. A Korean cue sheet of *Wrap Around the World* (c. 1988) came from the Archives of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea. I also consulted the full script of *Wrap Around the World* at SAAM's Paik Archive. Nam June Paik, "WRAP AROUND THE WORLD" Script Revision #3, September 10, 1988, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 9, Folder 7).

meaningless behaviors. Sapho's performance of "TV is Eating up Your Brain" and Oingo Boingo's song "Wake Up (It's 1984)" are also based on the novel. However, what makes this project more relevant to Orwell's prescient portrayal of the future mode of networking—whether optimistic or pessimistic—stems from its ontological challenge to the idea of language as the hegemonic means of human interaction. In order to respond to Orwell's inquiry into what sociopolitical roles languages retain in our future community, Paik proposed the potential of multisensorial art collaborations as a vital communication platform accomplished by new media technologies, such as TV and satellites.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* Orwell describes Newspeak, an official language system for Oceania, an authoritarian society where the protagonist Winston Smith lives in the year 1984. Prioritizing grammatical and pronunciational efficiency, Newspeak forms a sort of absolute standard to legitimize the ideology of the ruling authority that does not accept any error or deviation. In pursuit of the least number and definition of words disguised as efficacy, Newspeak symbolizes the acme of the controlling system that intends to synchronize all citizens' ways of speaking, writing, thinking, and even sensing.[97] A problem arises in moments where hierarchy and discrimination are generated among the speakers, depending on the relative accessibility of Newspeak or their intellectual understanding of its principle. As a result, this language system functions as a strict criterion for judging their moral and ideological eligibility for membership in Oceanian society. Paik's satellite projects embed several sequences from which we can derive various responses to Orwell's insights into what such an artificial language system means for collective forms of life in the future not yet come.

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[97] George Orwell, "The Principles of Newspeak," 1949, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by George Orwell (New York: Plume, 2003), 309-23.

5.1. Laurie Anderson's "The Language of the Future"

Anderson contributed two sequences to *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*: a pre-recorded music video of "This is the Picture (Excellent Birds)," collaboratively produced with Gabriel, and a five-minute solo performance of her "The Language of the Future," recorded live in the WNET/13 TV studio. While the former visualizes the theme of the song, inspired by Orwell's novel, through the two performers' choreographic postures inside a bluish set of virtual space, the latter dramatizes Anderson's charismatic presence in her quasi-monologue concert.

In her solo sequence, dressed in a shiny silver suit with a white tie, Anderson looks directly at the cameras and narrates her discovery of "the language of the future" **[Figure 1.27]**. The story begins with her experience of a crash landing on the riverbank near the La Guardia Airport in New York. Since that traumatic crash, every time she boards an airplane, she spots a fellow passenger who is on "the same wavelength" with her and can talk with her in case of a potential panic situation. Then she meets a teenaged girl on another flight from Los Angeles, whose language sounds uncanny, unhinged, and "so digital" to her.

> … A GIRL, ABOUT FIFTEEN. AND SHE HAD THIS STUFFED RABBIT SET UP ON HER TRAY TABLE AND SHE KEPT ARRANGING AND REARRANGING THE RABBIT AND KIND OF WAVING TO IT: +HI HI THERE+ AND I DECIDED: THIS IS THE ONE I WANT TO SIT NEXT TO. SO I SAT DOWN AND WE STARTED TO TALK AND SUDDENLY I REALIZED SHE WAS SPEAKING AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LANGUAGE. COMPUTERESE. A KIND OF HIGH-TECH LINGO. EVERYTHING WAS CIRCUITRY, ELECTRONICS, SWITCHING. WE TALKED MOSTLY ABOUT HER BOYFRIEND. THIS GUY WAS NEVER IN A BAD MOOD. HE WAS IN BAD MODE. MODEY KIND OF GUY. THE ROMANCE WAS APPARENTLY KIND OF ROCKY AND SHE KEPT SAYING: +MAN OH MAN YOU KNOW LIKE IT'S SO DIGITAL+ SHE JUST MEANT THE RELATIONSHIP WAS ON AGAIN, OFF AGAIN. ALWAYS TWO THINGS SWITCHING. CURRENT RUNDS [RUNS] THROUGH BODIES AND THEN IT DOESN'T. IT WAS A LANGUAGE OF SOUNDS, OF NOISE, OF SWITCHING, OF SIGNALS. IT WAS THE LANGUAGE OF THE RABBIT, THE CARIBOU, THE PENGUIN, THE BEAVER. A LANGUAGE OF THE PAST. CURRENT RUNDS [RUNS] THROUGH BODIES. AND THEN IT DOESN'T. ON AGAIN. OFF

AGAIN. ALWAYS TWO THINGS SWITCHING. ONE THING INSTANTLY REPLACES ANOTHER. IT WAS THE LANGUAGE OF THE FUTURE.[98]

What Anderson senses from her interaction with the girl is "the language of the future." This language is no longer a conveyor of meaning; instead, it is a highly simplified form of digital signals transmitted by a binary system—endlessly going on and off, "circuitry, electronics, switching." By creating a parallel with such a shifting mode of relationship that repeats connection and disconnection, Anderson's narrative voice keeps converting from male to female, from human to machinery. At the climax of the performance, the studio suddenly dims with an augmented beep-beep sound. The darkened backdrop swallows up her face, and only a silhouette of her torso fills the screen **[Figure 1.28]**. She ends the performance by lifting her arms like a bird, bending two fingers, and saying: "This is the language of the on again off again future. And it is - DIGITAL" in a computerized voice.

The "high-tech lingo" that she heard while literally in the air and speaks during her performance of "the Language of the Future" further corresponds to the opening animation of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* **[Figure 1.29]**. A red lip emerges on an empty black space and recites the title twice, first in English and then in French, "Bonjour, Monsieur Orwell." The robot-like genderless voice of the lip calls attention to the two-way communication of the satellite broadcasts. With the delicate visual scheme of the complex screenplay, such gestures of switching and shuttling between the human-nonhuman voices and different languages denote the incompleteness of language-based human communication, which always generates a certain interstice between the on and off modes.

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[98] Lyric of Laurie Anderson, "The Language of the Future."

"The Language of the Future" performance was transmitted in its full length without overlaps with other sequences in the New York live version of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*. However, a variety of special effects were applied to its visualization in both revised and post-production versions, such as fade-in, close up, rotation, cut, and splitting. Anderson's performing presence in these post-editions overlays with the segments from Paris, such as Hubert's fireworks, Beuys's performance, Urban Sax's music, Montand's dance, and Combas's graffiti work. The specific gravity Anderson's performance holds in these post-edited versions implies that Paik brought her rhetoric of technology-driven languages as the global model of connectivity into his satellite events.

As a member of the 1984 invaders, Anderson's look in "The Language of the Future" performance constitutes the most iconic visual in Paik's satellite program even after 1984. Anderson was the one whom Paik tentatively selected as the New York host of *Bye Bye Kipling* as a counterpart to Tokyo's Sakamoto.[99] Above all, this is because she already earned recognition as a star artist in Japan thanks to her successful "Mister Heartbreak" tour to Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto in June 1984. The enormous production cost might have forced Paik to be highly tactical in promoting the series through its cast full of famous names, including Anderson, Cage, Ginsberg, Cunningham, and Sakamoto, among many others. Anderson would have been the best candidate for such a purpose, considering her popularity on both sides of the Pacific as well as in both popular culture and avant-garde art scenes in the mid-1980s. One of the early scripts of *Bye Bye Kipling* reveals that Paik planned to make Anderson, as the U.S. host, wear Korean hanbok and Japanese kimono through which he would fashion her as a messenger flitting between the

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[99] Nam June Paik, "Script for *Bye-Bye Kipling*," July 17, 1986, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 15), 2-4.

East and the West.[100] Although her direct participation in *Bye Bye Kipling* was not realized, the program's opening sequence embraces Paik's video work made in the same year, *Butterfly* (1986) **[Figure 1.30]**, which uses clips from Anderson's "The Language of the Future" segment as primary source material.

The two-minute video *Butterfly* collages moving images (an electronic butterfly fluttering above the Manhattan skyline and virtual space, combined with visually manipulated fragments from Anderson's "The Language of the Future" in *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*) and sounds (a melody from a children's song *Butterfly* and an aria from *Madame Butterfly*). The video merges Anderson's performing body with a graphic butterfly that endlessly circumnavigates the cityscape and the colorized abstract space. It is also notable that the butterfly-related concepts and stories are recurrently drawn into Paik's writing. For example, a significant part of his unfulfilled "China Writings" project deals with the ancient Chinese philosopher of Daoism, Zhuangzi (c. 369–286 BC), known for his anecdote of a dreamy butterfly.[101] After waking up from a dream within which he is metamorphosed into a butterfly, Zhuangzi wonders if he is the one who dreamed of being a butterfly or whether a butterfly dreamt of being him. Another allegorical source for Paik's video would be the butterfly effect, an idea originated in Chaos Theory that the flapping of a butterfly's wings would make substantial differences in a remote place. In short, as a symbolic existence for a blurred verge between the real and the unreal in the East and a significant first step for great results in the West, a butterfly would be the most strategic allegory through which Paik could present what he sought to achieve in *Bye Bye Kipling*, the connecting of the East and the West.

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Decker-Phillips, "Nam June Paik's Chinese Memories," 383.

In 1995, Paik printed a set of photographic stills from a video of Anderson's "The Language of the Future," adapted from the revised or post-production version of *Good Morning Mr. Orwell* **[Figure 1.31]**. Dislocated from the continuously altering sound of her "high-tech lingo," these manipulated images freeze her performative presence into pixels caught in a transitory phase of digital translation. In addition to the identification of Anderson with a butterfly, the fact that Paik went back to this image a decade after the satellite trilogy demonstrates that he understood her role as visual and aesthetic evidence of what he so poignantly addressed in *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*—global connection beyond languages.

5.2. Lost Signals and Broken Languages

All three of Paik's satellite programs embed a similar episode that intentionally exposes certain unavoidable moments of disconnection and miscommunication owing to a second of delay in satellite transmission and language barriers. Kriegman and Fuller's interlude, "Cavalcade of Intellectuals" **[Figure 1.32]**, employs the idea of disconnection as a visual and narrative structure in *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*.[102] As a substitute panel for contemporary thinkers, especially Michel Foucault and Susan Sontag, these American TV writers discuss how television technology impacts human intimacy. The left side of the vertically divided screen displays Kriegman in New York, and Fuller speaks from Paris on the right side. Their conversation suddenly halts with the cracked screen and the "PLEASE STAND BY" pop-up message, which replaces Kriegman's appearance, and then the French message "VEUILLEZ PATIENTER" replaces Fuller's. This scene is a prearranged situation in which the two performers act like the satellite signals are lost in the air and blame the live broadcast's non-smooth progress. Once two

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[102] "Cavalcade of Intellectuals" does not appear in the revised version.

actors notice that the signal failure interrupts the live transmission (upon the scenario), they

decide to use the satellite connection for their private chat. Kriegman pushes Fuller to answer

back to his love confession from the previous night. The whole event is aired as such on purpose

in order to disclose the interstice between the public and the private, fractured by technical error

and the imperfection in human control of technology. In this way, "Cavalcade of Intellectuals"

produces an inevitable hiatus in social interaction that cannot be entirely governed by one

absolute system and is always open for intervention by outside vectors.

The split screen format provides a distinctive aesthetic strategy for Paik to unearth the

dichotomous aspect of the new media-driven interaction, which is reinforced by Sakamoto's

roles in *Bye Bye Kipling* and *Wrap Around the World*. Sakamoto is repeatedly linked to New

York participants during live broadcasting, thanks to his fluency in English. As the Tokyo host

for *Bye Bye Kipling*, he interacts with Cavett, his New York counterpart. Together, they lead

interviews with the participating artists or conduct Paik's satellite experimentations with a beer

glass or the Kahn twins. One of the most accidental interruptions between the vertically divided

screen occurs when Cavett is forced to adlib for an unforeseen blank time.[103] Appearing on the

left side of the screen, he calls Sakamoto on the right and asks him to introduce the next stage.

However, abruptly lost signals during the live transmission impeded Sakamoto from responding

to Cavett's call. In his recollection of this episode later, Paik said that such momentary

suspension was what he actually anticipated to happen during the live show, only achieved

through "the instinctive passion of a human being for adventure or the risk in its self."[104] As

such, not a part of the prepared scenario, this happening shapes a transitory through significant

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[103] This accident appears only in the live version and is not included in the EAI distributed edition.

[104] Nam June Paik, "A Satellite—The light of the future Asatte-literally, the day after tomorrow," 1987, in *Asatte raito*, 17.

lacuna for viewers to ruminate on the medium they use to communicate with others on the opposite side of Earth.

In *Wrap Around the World*, Sakamoto reunites with Bowie, with whom he co-acted in Nagisa Oshima's 1983 film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* **[Figure 1.33]**. Their conversation over the split screen enacts an awkward and even bizarre shuffling between the different languages. Bowie leads the dialogue in Japanese: he celebrates Sakamoto's recent winning of the Best Original Music Score at the Oscars, praises scientists whose efforts make this reunion over a satellite possible, and asks how the weather is in Japan. Sakamoto answers back in his fluent English (with a Japanese accent).

ITEM #18a.: BOWIE/SAKAMOTO INTERVIEW
(David Bowie)

DAVID
KON NICHI WA RYUICHI!
RYUICHI ACADEMEE – SHOW ONGAKU – SHOW OMEDETOH'

RYUICHI
Thank you, David.

DAVID
KAGAKU – GIJUTSU NI YOTTE BOKUTACHI GA KOWSHTE HANASERU NAN –
TE ODOROKI – DA – NE. KOREMO NAGAI – AIDA SEKAI NO KAGAKU – SHA
TACHI – NO DORYOKU – NO KETTKA NANDA – NE.

RYUICHI
Yes…

DAVID
TOKORO – DE NIHON – NO TENKI – WA DO KANA?

RYUICHI
Ah nice…How is it in in New York?

DAVID
(A) A little hot… SUKOSHI ATSUI – YO.
(B) Cool… SUZUSHI – YO.
(C) a little cold… SUKOSHI HADAZAMUI – YO.

                              RYUICHI
…I like your shirt

                              DAVID
ARIGATO RYUICHI HANASHI – GA DEKI – TE TANOSHI – KATTA – YO
SAYONARA RYUICHI

                              RYUICHI
And to you, David, Goodbye.[105]

However, Bowie's Japanese is not Japanese but rather an imitation of its sound. The script

transcribes the pronunciation of those Japanese words in Roman letters for him. Due to the

phonetic disparity between the two languages, the Japanese words are broken into syllables in

Bowie's speech. Then, the syllables are combined into an arbitrary set of words, making no sense

to native Japanese speakers. In order to catch their conversation, TV audiences—both English

and Japanese native speakers—must rely more on a crawling English subtitle on the bottom of

the television screen than the actual speech-sounds. Here, another kind of *lacuna* is generated in

between what they heard and what they read, which reaffirms the intrinsic incompleteness of the

language translation practice.

5.3. Dr. Mobius's Interlocator

Through the alien character of Dr. Mobius (Tom Davis) and his translation device, the

interlocator, Orwell's idea of linguistic control for a new type of collectivity was established as a

more detailed narrative of verbal translation in *Wrap Around the World*. The plot of this program

is that the WNET/13 TV reporter Al Franken pitches the value of human civilization to Dr.

Mobius, whose planet Krylon is about to invade Earth. Invited to his spacecraft, which mounts a

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[105] Paik, "WRAP AROUND THE WORLD Script Revision #3."

transmitter-receiver machine named "telescreen" after Orwell's novel, Franken guides Dr.

Mobius to watch the scenes from the 1988 Seoul Olympics with the world correspondents who

introduce the distinctive arts and sports of their countries.

Dr. Mobius can communicate with the Earth people through an interlocator, "a futuristic

hand-held speaking device," which resembles a megaphone **[Figure 1.34]**. The fifth sequence in

the live version depicts how this interlocator aids Dr. Mobius in understanding various human

languages.

ITEM #5: HOSTS_#2 w/VTPB:
(Franken & Davis)

SFX: SPACE AMBIANCE CONTINUES

CUT BACK TO TOM & AL

AL
So, Dr. Mobius…did what Fraulein Korner say appeal to your advanced set of values?

TOM
I am not unaware of the good side of the human spirit. And I appreciate what Fraulein
Korner just said about language. In fact, we Krylonians have developed this interlocator…

HE PRODUCES A FUTURISTIC HAND-HELD SPEAKING DEVICE.

TOM
…and should I decide not to destroy you, I may give this to your President of the United
Nations.

AL
Interlocator? What does it do Dr. Mobius?

TOM
When someone speaks into the interlocator, it translates the words of the speaker into the
language of his listener.

SPEAKS INTO OBJECT

For example, I am now speaking in my native Krylonian tongue, but you are hearing it in
your native English.

                                                    AL
Let me try. I do speak a little German

SPEAKS INTO OBJECT

Where is the train station. The train station is in the city. Is this not the library. Yes, this is
the…

TAKING THE OBJECT AWAY

…Bibliotech. Ah, this is amazing.

TOM GRABS IT BACK

                                            TOM
I'll take that back, thank you.

S-VTPB: SAUCER OVER WNET

                                        TOM V/O
I haven't made up my mind yet.[106]

As there is no longer a complex translation process needed, the interlocator sounds like a

panacea for humankind undergoing linguistic discrepancy since the Tower of Babel. Hence, Dr.

Mobius considers this device a latent gift for the earthmen, and Franken is fascinated by its

efficiency and magical power. Given the postulated circumstance that Krylon is more

technologically advanced than Earth, the interlocator foresees the potential system for post-

translational interaction in the future. Since the language system is the vital agency through

which we connect with others, its ontological transformation, expressed as the interlocator in this

story, influences how we conceive the world and its scope through technological advancement.

        Originally written in Japanese, the title of Paik's essay for the *SAT-ART III* booklet,

"Tenseijingo: A Star in Heaven Casts on Earth," settles on such planetary rhetoric for the

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[106] Ibid.

forthcoming systems of new communication.[107] Paik dedicates most of this text to acknowledging his all-star team of collaborating staff and artist-invaders in *Wrap Around the World* by stating how essential those peoples' efforts and cooperation are to realizing this all-inclusive project. However, more notable than the essay's content is its title, *tenseijigo* 天星人語 —only the English version has a subtitle, "A Star in Heaven Casts on Earth," which was added by the translator.

A word made of four Chinese characters *tenseijigo* is likely Paik's coined term as it is not found in Korean, Japanese, or Chinese dictionaries.[108] The term can be disarticulated as four letters that make multiple possible combinations composing a word. The first possibility is a pair of two-character words, *tensei* 天星 [the heaven or the heavenly stars] and *jingo* 人語 [human languages], so that the set together means "the heavenly stars and the languages of the human." Another possible parsing of the term is the first three letters *tenseijin* 天星人 [people of the heavenly stars or alien bodies], followed by the last character *go* 語 [languages]. In this case, the title would be translated as "the languages of the heavenly stars" or "the languages of the alien bodies." The latter seems a more appropriate choice, considering Dr. Mobius's episode with the interlocator and Paik's multiple planets/stars with the figures of his all-star team in the *1984 Invaders* etching. Therefore, to underline the ways in which these planets/stars embody the 1984 invaders in this print and all the artists who appeared in his satellite performances, I translate *jin*

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[107] For the English version, see Nam June Paik, "Tenseijingo: A Star in Heaven Casts on Earth," trans. Tatsuko Muraoka, in *SAT-ART III*, 14-15.

[108] It is noteworthy that the phrase *tenseijingo* 天声人語 also refers to a famous column title of one of the leading Japanese newspapers, the *Asahi Shimbun*, with which Paik was probably very familiar. This column title means "the voice of heaven is the voice of people," which is a literal translation of the Latin phrase, "Vox Populi, Vox Dei." However, the second character of this *tenseijingo*, *sei* 声, meaning a voice, is different from Paik's essay title, which uses a character of a star, *sei* 星.

人 as not merely the human or people but as a body, as in "the alien bodies." Echoing Paik's array of universe-inspired qualifiers for *Wrap Around the World*, such as "Rendez-vous Celeste" or "Space Rainbow," this term *tenseijigo* as "the languages of the alien bodies" accentuates the enlarged context of interaction among the global viewers who are now connected via one shared language—the arts—in this piece.[109]

6. Bodies in Orbit

Paik's concept of *tenseijingo* further resonates with the ways in which his satellite projects recast the structure of non-verbal communication. The third Chinese character, *jin* 人, refers to the human, which I deliberately translated as a body in the previous section. As one of the Chinese characters Paik incorporates with his TV icon in the *Cage TV* sketches in the early 1970s, this one-letter concept condenses his continuous artistic effort to literally embody the medium. Besides the more general idea of the body of flesh, such a flexible interpretation of this particular character allows us to unfold another critical thread of Paik's satellite enactment of global grooving. Three segments from his satellite series locate the performers' bodies in space where a satellite mediates the trans-continental connection: "Space Feedback," "*Mudang*," and "TV Shrine."

6.1. Merce Cunningham's "Space Feedback"

As one of the key contributors to *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, Cunningham and his moving body envisage how the corporeal presence of the human visually and semantically operates on the

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[109] Nam June Paik, "Rendez-vous Celeste," c. 1988, in *The Electronic Super Highway*, 141-43; Nam June Paik, "Space Rainbow (Wrap Around the World)," June 3, 1988, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 9, Folder 6).

transatlantic circuit. In a sequence entitled "Space Feedback" **[Figure 1.35]**, Cunningham dances

to Cage's cactus sound on the New York studio's live stage for five minutes and twenty seconds.

Paik borrowed the very idea of "feedback in space" from the American media artists Kit

Galloway (b.1948) and Sherrie Rabinowitz (1950–2013). The videotape *Hole in Space* (1980)

documents their seminal telecollaborative project that linked New York and Los Angeles via

satellite for three nights.[110] Paik's "First Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*" (c. 1983) informs

that the initial plan of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* contained his performance with TV and a

candle, adapting Galloway and Rabinowitz's candle feedback experiment. Paik scripts,

> I put a candle in front of TV monitor in Paris and the New York camera man (he must be
> the best cameraman in the crew) shoot it and return the picture to Paris, … according to my
> move we can make a fantastic time delayed feedback which only satellite can make … Kit
> and Shierrie [Sherrie] team made a convincing cased of this feedback through transs-
> american [trans-American] microwave feedback using a dancer. I will start with candle,
> then try the hand clapping (thus experimenting and proving the difference of time delay in
> picture and sound) and later do whole face and mody [body] movement. Although I don't
> look as good as a young lady dancer, (as it was the in the original performance in San
> Francisco), I can do better in utilizing the unforeseen effect, which will be spectacular even
> for the ordinary folks. Host or commentater [commentator] should explain to the layman
> eactly [exactly] this live science fiction movie. eg. the half inch distance between two
> images means the many thousand miles space electronically compressed and we see twenty
> of them that means million miles of electronic trip in one picture. …[111]

Under the description of the scene on page 7 **[Figure 1.36]**, Paik appended a simple conceptual

drawing—ten candles aligned within a rectangular TV frame—and marked "each distance is the

distance of N.Y-PARIS compressed into ½ inch." Resembling nineteenth-century slow-motion

photography, this drawing depicts the single candle Paik lights in Paris, not the array of ten

different candles. The time delay over the satellite network makes his candle multiplied on a TV

screen at a regular interval that equals "the many thousand miles." Cunningham's "Space

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[110] Paik, "Art & Satellite"; Paik, "A Satellite—The light of the future Asatte-literally, the day after tomorrow," 15-16.

[111] Paik, "First Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*," 6-7.

Feedback" displays a moving image identical to this illustration of the candle put in "the electronically compressed" transmission. What substituted Paik's candle, which was left out in the actual performance of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, was the body of Cunningham, whose manifold traces of movement were imprinted onto the TV monitor.

In addition to Cage's cactus sound, "Space Feedback" takes over Kriegman's classic blues yodel recital performed at the WNET/13 TV studio. The New York host Plimpton describes Kriegman's sequence as "Space Yodel," which generates echoes during the two-way transmission of the signals from New York to Paris and again to New York. Such an unavoidable second of time lag materializes a feedback cycle of sound and image and creates an interstitial space warped by Cunningham's overlapped performing bodies. His body movements establish the visual signals situated in the transatlantic loop, or "live science fiction," as introduced by Plimpton in both the New York and Paris live versions. The script reads,

> KRIEGAMN YODELS/ FEEDBACK/ +SPACE YODEL+
>
> NOW, WHEN APPLIED TO THE ART OF MOVEMENT AND THE DANCE OF MERCE CUNNINGHAM. OUR SATELLITE FEEDBACK MOVES US INTO THE REALM OF +LIVE SCIENCE FICTION. +LET'S VENTURE A QUANTUM LEAP FROM YDELING [YODELING] TO DANCE AS WE OBSERVE THE LEGENDARY MERCE CUNNINGHAM, AS HE BECOMES THE FIRST MAN OF NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR TO TRULY DANCE WITH HIMSELF….[112]

In place of the host's introduction, the EAI version inserts a caption, "Space Feedback….. Cunningham's image shuttling between New York and Paris at the speed of light, like an endless mirror. 92.000 miles between each image." These lines underscore Paik's efforts to define the unprecedented scale of his satellite art through an ostensibly logical process to measure the distance between each visual echo of Cunningham's body in signal flow, which is impossible in

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[112] Paik, "Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*."

actuality. Paik's distinctive rhetoric, such as "truly dance with himself" and "an endless mirror," further formulates Cunningham's body as the most cardinal entity to assess the spatial distance and to visualize the reciprocal vibrancy of satellite signals that "compress" the distance.

Cunningham begins his choreography in the black backdrop of the WNET/13 TV studio, which soon absorbs other components from *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, through a chroma keying technique. Cunningham's dancing body first overlays with the prerecorded narration of Dali in front of Chairman Mao's portrait and then with a video of Piazzola's playing of musical instruments. Finally, the screen splits vertically into New York's Cunningham and Charlie Chaplin's pantomime on the Parisian street, broadcast from the Centre Georges Pompidou. In this series of performance collages that "quantum leap" from space to space and time to time, Cunningham's somatic existence forms diverse rapports not only with Dali (and Mao Zedong), Piazzola, and Chaplin from the video clips but also with his own bodies captured in the immediate past. His body acts as a hyperlink for the TV audience to be immersed into this newly perceived space-time of collective intimacy.

In the "Space Feedback" segment, the visualization of a feedback loop through Cunningham's body derails the linearity of the event and the once-ness of live streaming, or what Paik terms "time-based information." Such a disruption of the normalcy of order and system is consonant with the ways in which Paik deconstructed the existing spatiotemporal frame and sociohistorical context in his TV installations (e.g., *Random Access*) and video works (e.g., *Global Groove*) through the tactics of randomness and fragmentation.

6.2. Trans-Body of *Mudang*

Paik's metaphorical appropriation of Anderson and Cunningham as human agent of connection in *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* is specified as the trans-body of a *mudang* 무당 in *Bye Bye Kipling*. In the simplest explanation, a Korean shaman *mudang* is typically a woman who performs a Korean shamanistic rite, *gut* 굿. This shamanistic spectacle of *gut* is classified into numerous types with varied ritual functions, such as exorcizing, praying for peace and good health, and soothing the soul of a dead person. As the ceremony progresses, a *mudang* tries to spiritually connect with indigenous deities, ancestors, and dead people through her unique shamanistic actions—dancing with fans and sword blades, walking on a string, and screaming an incantation, to list just a few. With her dynamic body movements and spell recital, a *mudang* actively encourages spectators to get involved in this *gut* performance and mediates the encounter between humans on Earth and supernatural existence in the spiritual terrain. The *mudang* Paik summoned to the New York stage of *Bye Bye Kipling* was Hi-Ah Chai, dressed in a flaming red shaman costume with sleeves of multicolored stripes **[Figure 1.37]**. Introduced by Cavett, Chai executes her shamanistic rite to pray toward a satellite for the success of this live telecast. Played by traditional Korean percussion instruments, the loud background sound for the *mudang* performance is marvelously blended with the Philip Glass Ensemble's music, "Rubric," heightening the auditory spectacle at the climax of Chai's *gut*.

Similar to Anderson's association with a butterfly, Chai's bodily presence constructs a special tie with an actual satellite. In the ensuing scene in the live version, her *gut* performance is minimized to a small box in the bottom right corner of the screen and superimposed with the image of a giant satellite sailing in the atmosphere **[Figure 1.38]**. Reminiscent of Paik's personified TV icons, the juxtaposition of *mudang*'s corporeality with a satellite symbolizes the

two entities' shared mission to transmit signals and wire the people in the different spatiotemporal compass. Paik displays the trans-body of a *mudang* as living evidence of the altered modes of transmitting information and communicating experience, the kernel of his satellite art that "grooves" in the intermedia space.

Gut has remained in Paik's childhood memory for a long time since his mother had been an ardent adherent of the Korean shamanistic custom and regularly invited a *mudang* to their residence for special family events. He recalled specific sensory fragments of *gut* memories, such as a *mudang* dancing on a fodder chopper or a boiled head of an ox prepared as the sacrificial offering, as seen in his statement, "[M]usok is the queen of the night, shivery feast in late fall [my translation]."[113] Paik's special bonding with Beuys also awakened his memory of *gut* and led him to incorporate a *mudang* into his works of art. After he survived a plane crash during World War II, with the care of Tartar people, Beuys deeply engrossed himself in shamanism, which became a recurrent topic of the conversation with Paik on arts.[114] In "Tenseijingo," Paik describes how he came up with the *mudang* component for *Bye Bye Kipling*,

> "BYE-BYE KIPLING" – In all Korean folk art Mudong [Mudang] is the one I feel closest. My contact with Beuys may have started with Mudong [Mudang]. When Beuys was injured during the war in Ta[r]tar in Crimea he saw a shaman there. The shaman's performance had much in common with Korean Mudong [Mudang].[115]

Namely, Paik rediscovered the potential of shamanistic practice as a universal material for arts for all. This brief comment expresses his emotional and practical affinity as an artist with a shaman, which resulted in the fashioning of his artistic persona as a *mudang*.

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[113] Nam June Paik, "Seo" 序 [Preface], 1992, in *Gunmoning, miseuteo baek* 굿모닝, 미스터 백! [Good Morning, Mr. Paik!], by Hong-hee Kim (Seoul: Design House, 2007), 15.

[114] Nam June Paik, *Nam June Paik: Beuys Vox 1961–1986* (Seoul: Won Gallery; Hyundai Gallery, 1990).

[115] Paik, "Tenseijingo," 13.

In one interview with a Korean newspaper conducted during his visit to Seoul in June

1984, Paik mentioned that art is not different from *gut*, "Art is half fraud. Cheating and cheating.

Art is to delude the public. Art is not a mass game but a festival. It is a feast. It is just like our

gut. I am a *gut* performer. I am a clown who instigates lots of people to scream and dance [my

translation]."[116] Moreover, in an essay on shamanism in video art, video artist Larry Litt equates

Paik to a *Pansu-mutal*, "the invisible gods of this remote control," and his performance

collaborator Moorman as an American *mudang*, who is a "shaman or musician, permanently

pattering on videotape your adlibs that makes the world know your own trance love for

performing video kut [gut], the ritual."[117] A *Pansu-mutal* is perhaps an alternative spelling of a

baksu mudang 박수무당, a male version of a *mudang*. These perspectives that identify Paik and

Moorman as *mudang*s coincide with Paik's wife and video artist Shigeko Kubota's recollection

that his action in the Fluxus performances with Moorman was infallibly that of a shaman.[118]

Korean curator and art critic Hong-hee Kim also contends that several shamanistic features

embodied in Paik's art provide remarkable analogies between *gut* and his earlier performance

and video art, in terms of a participation-oriented nature and an emphasis on theatricality and

rituality.[119] Paik's artistic striving for communication through means beyond human language

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[116] "'Hanguginui saengmyeongnyeok jakpume damgosipeote' 34nyeonmane mogugeul deulleobon jeonwiyesulga baengnamjunssi" "한국인의 생명력 작품에 담고싶어" 34 년만에 모국을 들러본 전위예술가 백남준씨 ["I Want to Embrace the Vitality of Korean People into My Work" Avant-garde Artist Nam June Paik Visits His Home Country after 34 years], *JoongAng Ilbo*, June 30, 1984.

[117] Larry Litt, "Excerpt from Video-Mudang–Shamanism/Shamanisn't," in *Nam June Paik: eine DATA base*, eds. Klaus Bussman and Flroian Matzner (Stuttgart: Edition Cantz, 1993), 94-95.

[118] Shigeko Kubota and Jungho Nam, *Naui sarang, baengnamjun* 나의 사랑, 백남준 [My Love, Paik Nam June] (Seoul: Yisoon, 2010), 255-56.

[119] Hong-hee Kim, *Gunmoning, miseuteo baek*, 108-11. Also see Hong-hee Kim, "Problem of Audience—Participation which Emerged in Nam June Paik's Video Art 'participation—TV' as an Extended Concept of Happening," in *A Pas de Loup: De Séoul à Budapest*, by Nam June Paik (Seoul: Galerie Hyundai; Galerie Won, 1991), 88-101.

shares its ultimate mission with the shaman as an interlocutor between those on Earth and those in the spirit world. Thus, as a natural consequence, Paik himself took the very role of artist-shaman in *Wrap Around the World*.

Succinctly described in the project script as "PARALLEL NAM JUNE PAIK IN NEW YORK: Lighting Candles & burning hat & other Spiritual Rituals in front of TV SHRINE IN STUDIO," the "TV Shrine" segment **[Figure 1.39]** assembles a variety of actions from both his earlier Fluxus performances and typical Korean ancestral rites.[120] Attired in a white traditional Korean overcoat and a *gat* 갓 [a black hat made of horsehair], Paik lights a candle inside an antique television cabinet. He then puts his *gat* on a small table in front of this *TV candle*, spreads shaving cream over the *gat*, and sprinkles uncooked rice. While he rubs his face into the *gat* roughly covered with creams and rice, he shouts, "Continue music! Continue music!" The subsequent scene shows the BBC control room in London. In reaction to Paik's *gut* performance, the BBC producer says in shock and wonder, "This man looks more like an alien than a real alien."[121] Following the narratives of the *1984 Invaders* print and Dr. Mobius from Krylon, Paik's persona of a *mudang*-alien in this sequence signifies the ways in which he implants the transcendental power of the human body as an elemental language in his satellite portraiture of the global future—*tenseijingo*.

Based on the primary props Paik brings into "TV Shrine"—a hat, shaving cream, ketchup, and rice—I read this segment as a prequel to his mesmerizing performance, *Gut for Joseph Beuys* (1990) **[Figure 1.40]**, a requiem or a commemorative ceremony for Beuys who passed away in January 1986. Presented in the courtyard of Hyundai Gallery, Seoul, in July 1990, *Gut*

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[120] Paik, "WRAP AROUND THE WORLD" Script Revision #3.

[121] Ibid.

for Joseph Beuys characterizes how the artist's memory and knowledge about the traditional ritual are materialized into his distinctive artistic language. Wearing the same outfit as the one in the "TV Shrine" segment, Paik led one hour of *gut* concurrently with the one performed by a well-known *mudang* couple, Sokchul Kim (1922–2005) and Yuson Kim (b.1932). While the couple conducts their shamanist rites for the deceased soul of Beuys in the conventional format, Paik transforms it into his signature Fluxus actions, such as putting rice bawl on a stripped off piano or scattering grains of rice on a folding screen decorated with Beuys's portraits and name in Chinese characters. This time, Paik's *gut* performance comprises more multi-faceted actions than what he did for "TV Shrine." A pair of hats—Beuys' s signature felt hat and Paik's Korean *gat*—is once again covered with cream and ketchup as symbolic props for the wound and recovery of Beuys during his stay at the Tartarian village. The sprinkled uncooked rice represents an essential part of the ceremonial procedure of Korean rituals in which an offering to the ancestors is made.

Around five hundred people viewed the whole ceremony process, which was filmed by French film director Jean-Paul Fargier (b.1944) for the broadcast in France through Canal Plus TV.[122] As Paik writes in his short essay, "Spirit-Media-Kut," included in the exhibition catalog for *Gut for Joseph Beuys,* this performance is "media-lized" through the process of its digital translation into a (Fargier's) video. By indicating the conceptual origin of the term "media" in medieval theology, wherein it means an instrument of communicating with God, Paik also asserts that "gut is a synonym of media."[123] I claim that such parallels drawn between *gut* and media, *mudang* and artist, manifest Paik's worldview adumbrated by his satellite trilogy. The

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[122] For Fargier's analysis of the video record of *Gut for Joseph Beuys*, see Jean-Paul Fargier, "White Magic," in *A Pas de Loup*, 10-21.

[123] Nam June Paik, "Spirit-Media-Kut," in *A Pas de Loup*, 46.

trans-body of a *mudang* that Paik brought into his electronic and globalized *gut* established a visual signifier for the audience to sense a newly contextualized world. This world transcends the hackneyed dichotomy of the East vs. the West, live vs. canned, and even life vs. death to offer a kind of telepathy or trans-body communication that does not require language.

7. The Gestures of the Global

Paik's satellite grooving of the world in the mid-1980s encapsulates his clairvoyant perspective toward the future modes of human interaction and information circulation over electronic channels that infiltrate every corner of the current digital epoch. In his 1976 report submitted to the Rockefeller Foundation, "Media Planning for the Postindustrial Society," Paik first used the term, "electronic superhighways," a broadband-based network that expands the scale and accelerates the speed of telecommunication.[124] By examining the extensive socioeconomic and cultural advantages of "electronic superhighways," which he deemed a mainstay of postindustrial society in this report, he maintains that the communication technology industry will drastically change every aspect of human life in the approaching decades. As a practical means of global grooving grounded by such a new electronic superhighway, Paik's satellite telecast series registers diverse forms of collective gestures—paralleling, circling, and wrapping. From the live performances to the post-event productions of the trilogy, these motions not only materialize the ways in which Paik connects the world, but also instruct the viewers on how to join his broadcasting festivals.

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[124] Nam June Paik, "Media Planning for the Postindustrial Society," 1976, reprinted in *The Electronic Super Highway*, 46.

7.1. Paralleling: Transnational Ensembles

The aesthetic and practical essence of Paik's satellite programs is the ways in which he convened

the unprecedented cast of all-star artists separated from each other through his tactical screen

design of split-up and layering. By bringing multiple performers into the same live TV screen,

these works place various localities within a parallel circuit of the global. As Paik mentions in

"Art & Satellite," the encounter between Cage and Beuys, who "have never performed together,"

forms the highlight of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*.[125] The eighth sequence of both the New York

and the Paris live versions begins in the WNET/13 TV studio, where Cage sits around a table and

improvises sound by oscillating strings with a cactus leaf and a feather with Kosugi and Tone.

Then the camera turns to Beuys's performance with two Turkish pianists in Paris, *Trousers for*

the 21st Century. Wearing trousers with circular holes cut into the right knee and lying down

under a grand piano, Beuys and the Turkish performers repeatedly raise their knees toward a

keyboard.[126] Finally, over Plimpton's voice introducing Cage's and Beuys's art practices, the TV

screen splits into three horizontal sections: the upper frame zooms in on Cage and the lower two

zoom out of the view of Beuys from behind and beside him. The revised version further varies

this visual ensemble by inserting an extra frame, where a transparent outline of Cage's bust

overlays with a full shot of Beuys's performance **[Figure 1.41]**. Here, the layering of two artists

and two local stations during the live telecast disrupts viewers' perception of space-time. Rather

than merely providing a piece of background music with Beuys across the Atlantic, Cage shares

the same performing space with the German artist on the TV screen. This segment propels

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[125] Paik, "Art & Satellite."

[126] Beuys also developed these pants as an individual art object, *The Orwell Leg–Trousers for the 21st Century* (1984). Jörg Schellmann ed., *Joseph Beuys, The Multiples: Catalogue Raisonné of Multiples and Prints* (Cambridge, MA: Busch-Reisings Museum, Harvard University Museum; Minneapolis: Walker Art Center; Munich; New York: Edition Schellmann, 1997), 491.

viewers to observe an entirely new spatiotemporal dimension of intimacy that exists in a real place and in the virtual world at the same time.

A storyboard for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* **[Figure 1.42]** demonstrates that Paik's initial frame composition for this segment had seven variations of the screen division. In addition to the most rudimentary design, which vertically and horizontally halves the screen, the figures are upside-down or swirling inside the dissected frames. In the actual broadcasting, Cage's ensemble with Beuys generates more energetic and reciprocal flow on the TV screen-canvas through its continuous intersection with the segments of other artists, such as Ginsberg and Orlovsky, Moorman, Hubert, and Urban Sax. In that sense, a split screen and layering system stress the interplay between the two head artists' distinctive styles and sync the temporality of their performance stages in different time zones. Packed with visual and acoustic components emerging from a multi-frame, multi-angle screen arrangement, this sequence effectively embodies an atypical and fluctuating aspect of transnational contact facilitated by live satellite transmission.

For the equivalent segments in the two satellite projects that followed, Paik decided on a specific title that highlights both spatial distance and temporal synchronicity. The first of such sequences is "Parallel Performance" in *Bye Bye Kipling*, which juxtaposes New York's Lou Reed Band with Tokyo's Sakamoto. For their satellite jam session, the Lou Reed Band makes the powerful rocking sound of their 1986 single "The Original Wrapper" to Sakamoto's jazz piano accompaniment. The EAI videotape shows a far more delicate visual blending of the two musical acts than the clearly divided split screen of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*. Without a frame outline, the screen displays a single frame that completely piles up semi-transparent moving images of the Lou Reed Band and Sakamoto. Whereas the transatlantic collaboration of Cage and Beuys

concentrates on materializing the dynamic process by which two artists came to meet on the same TV stage, the emphasis in "Parallel Performance" is placed on capturing the wholeness of this trans-continental connection accomplished by the intervention of advanced technology.

Lastly, "Transpacific Duet" **[Figure 1.43]** forms a climax of *Wrap Around the World*, in which Cunningham in New York dances to Japanese traditional music played by Sakamoto in Tokyo. Following his crosslingual conversation with Bowie over a satellite, Sakamoto leads a musical performance with three samisen players wearing a red kimono. By reprising the "Space Feedback" sequence from *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, Cunningham's choreographic body perfectly harmonizes with the sound of traditional Japanese music. He begins dancing on the entirely black stage of the New York studio. His backdrop is soon filled with scenes from the Tokyo stage and a close-up of Sakamoto's face and hands on a keyboard seen from above. The screen is then changed to an intricate composition of frames containing a group of mini screens laid inside two horizontal film strips that flow in the opposite directions. Each strip shows the live scenes transmitted from New York and Tokyo. The images of both artists add another layer on top of those strips so that the screen surface encompasses multiple spatial dimensions. Mixing the design strategies of the previous two pieces, "Transpacific Duet" is a culmination of Paik's practical and aesthetic approach to parallel his global invaders to each other.

7.2. Circling: A Ball and a Tower

As the second form of the collective gestures of the global, Paik's satellite broadcasts display a wide variety of motifs, imagery, and senses that invoke circling motions, such as revolving, spinning, convoluting, and rolling. Not to mention his design for the planet icon encircled by an orbit shape, various computer graphic techniques applied to the post-production and revised

editions use the dizzy bustle of circling movements as a tactic to elevate the grooving spirit. With Garrin and Blumberg, Paik recomposed the core segments cut from the live versions or still image shots of the performances. Each of these fragments swirls or spins on the screens of these post-edited versions, which array the audiovisual materials in more rhythmical and almost hypnotic constructions.

Inserted into *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, Winkler and Sanborn's graphic video *Act III* is another example that employs the effect of circling motions to highlight Paik and his 1984 invaders' outlook toward the future through its rose-colored spectacle produced by a then most up-to-date computer technology. *Act III* features a group of geometric figures that roll over and over the abstract landscapes of nature and space. With the changing size, numbers, and directions of movements, these geometric figures continuously convert their arrangements from two-dimensional circles to three-dimensional spheres. The inclusion of this video with highly futuristic visuals for the period around 1984 speaks to Paik's powerful statement of how much more dynamic and expanded our viewing experiences will be with a TV screen through advanced computer graphic techniques and video art.

In order to foreground the intensified global networking, the live version of *Wrap Around the World* also visualizes circling motions in its several sequences, such as the title animation with a world map metamorphosing into a globe and a short graphic animation of a soccer player. The soccer graphic is a part of the edited video mixed with scenes from a Brazilian commercial, the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and Durae Pae's performance with *seol jango* dancers in Korea. In the soccer graphic, the camera zooms in on a soccer player in a striped uniform who kicks a ball. His ball then passes over a goalpost and further flies into the sky. The flying ball is smoothly transmitted to the next scene along the way of its parabola. Like the title animation, the soccer

graphic takes a metaphoric function of a ball that is not only identified with the globe but also signifies boundless linkage because of the non-orientable surface of a sphere. That is, the ball in these graphic segments serves not as a message simply advocating "let's become one;" it also calls upon us to understand the multi-directionality of global flows while preserving the uniqueness of individual cultures.

Paik combined such a dynamic flow of the global connection implicated in a ball's rolling movement with the real-time communicative potential of video as an artistic medium. He showed up at the last live stage of *Bye Bye Kipling* to introduce his "newest invention," *Video Ball*, for which he implanted a tiny camera inside a white ball **[Figure 1.44]**.[127] In this segment, he explains the functions of *Video Ball* to the Tokyo host Sakamoto and demonstrates the usage:

> This is a newest tool to make a[n] exercise. This is much better than Jane Fonda. Ok? We'll beat the Jane Fonda, because it makes our exercise much more interesting. You cannot get bored. Sakamoto, it's very interesting. You can take a pinch off by doing this and you can make video, too. OK? OK? OK? so now you see all what the camera's doing.[128]

Since Paik is holding *Video Ball* with his two hands while he is talking, the embedded camera shoots his upside-down face or the inside of his mouth projected onto the screen of the Arc Hills Plaza stage. If he tosses *Video Ball* up in the air, the screen follows the tracks of the camera in real-time. While this portable camera with an entertaining function allows spectators to become video creators, the reciprocal actions represented by a ball further locate them on the feedback loop of the video content as both producers and receivers. This repositioning of both the artists and the audience of video art by this feedback process characterizes their contacts as processes of flowing, circuitry, and shuffling.

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[127] Paik, *SAT-ART III*, 79.

[128] Ibid., 80.

However, the most striking visualization and materialization of the circling gestures in the satellite series comes from the segment titled "The More, The Better" **[Figure 1.45]**. Paik's four-channel video installation, *The More, The Better*, appears throughout *Wrap Around the World*. Commissioned by the MMCA and produced in collaboration with Korean architect Won Kim (b.1943), Paik customized the pagoda-structure of *The More, The Better* for the museum's rotunda that connects the main galleries through a ramp core. The viewers can see this megalithic work from multiple angles while walking up or down through the passageway. The monumentality of *The More, The Better* arises first and foremost from its scale with the 1003 analog TV monitors stacked up to a seven-story tower, whose height is 60.8 feet and diameter is 36 feet. Given the fact that the number 1003 designates October 3, the National Foundation Day of Korea, this work epitomizes Paik's deep respect for the long history of his mother country and celebrates its first global appearance through the successful Seoul Olympics, especially meaningful after the country's recovery from the Korean War and its aftermath.

Wrap Around the World displays such heightened spirits of admiration and festivity through the augmenting sensation in the Durae Pae's *samul nori* segment performed in front of the installation *The More, The Better* and the *seol jango* performance on the rampway. The *samul nori* players liven up the mood with their four round-shaped traditional percussion instruments (gongs and drums) and the female performers playing a *janggu*. One of the *samul nori* members continually twirls his *sangmo* (a special spinning hat) with a long white tail, whose flowing, concentric movement echoes the circular shapes of the installation and the ramp core.

For the cylindrical layout of the structure of *The More, The Better*, Paik referenced and paid homage to four historical artifacts: Stonehenge; the three-story stone pagoda of the Changnimsa site constructed in Korea's United Silla period (676–935); the sixteenth-century

Flemish painting *The Tower of Babel* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1525–69); and *The Monument to the Third International* (1919–20) designed by the Russian avant-garde artist Vladimir Tatlin (1885–1953).[129] The display of 1003 TV monitors in *The More, The Better* imitates Stonehenge's arrangement of large stones—some are horizontally placed over the erected ones arrayed in a rim. Likewise, Paik installed his TV sets in two positions: some were placed along the lateral surfaces of the metal support, and others were laid on top of each level so that their screens faced upward. Meanwhile, the Buddhist pagoda provides a prototype of the stair system Paik employed in his installation, which piles up structures in identical shapes but in different sizes. This structural feature also pertains to the bodily experience of this video work through the circling movements, reminiscent of *tabdori* 탑돌이 [go-round pagoda], an essential Buddhist ceremony. In this ritual, as a method of showing veneration toward Buddha and the tower, a monk walks around a stone pagoda chanting the Buddhist scriptures, and then the devotees follow him. Similarly, museum visitors are naturally directed to circle *The More, The Better* along the ramp-core, as if this video tower is the object of devotion.

Finally, despite the structural differences in a strict sense, *The More, The Better* shares its aspiration and conviction for a better future both with the story of the Tower of Babel and Tatlin's proposal for the Constructivist monument. The ascending spiral shape of these artificial structures from history connotes human attempts to reach a certain ideal state, whether that is the unified and monolingual heaven or the acme of modernity. With these crucial examples found in art history, a form of the spiraling helix stands for an artistic symbol that portrays human confidence—although it was regarded as foolish and failed in the Biblical story of the Tower of

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[129] Nam June Paik and Won Kim, *"The More, The Better" = Dadaigseon = Dadaigseon* "The More, the Better" = 다다익선 = 多多益善 ["The More, the Better" = The More, The Better = The More, The Better] (Seoul: Doseochulpan gwangjang, 2018), 179-80.

Babel—and the yearning for a new world—although Tatlin's proposal was deemed unrealistic and thus never materialized. Through the structural adaptation of these architectural designs, Paik located *The More, The Better* in the genealogy of the encircled visual as an aesthetic emblem of utopian desire. Further, by presenting his installation together with traditional music and dance performances as representative entertainments of Korea in *Wrap Around the World*, he delivered the message that his satellite project manifests the global world wired through TV as our new ideal and reality.

7.3. Wrapping: Toward the Aesthetic of *Furoshiki*

Paik created several preliminary proposals and scripts for *Wrap Around the World* with various titles, including "Good Morning is Good Evening," "Chip Olympics," "SYNC 21," and "Space Rainbow."[130] These initial titles, especially words like "sync" and "rainbow," reveal that Paik's idea for the finale of the satellite series was moving toward elevating connectivity. Moreover, in the course of the translation of the official title into Korean and Japanese, another sensory layer was attached to the notion of connection. For example, the Korean version for KBS broadcasting was *Segyewa son jabgo* 세계와 손잡고 [Holding Hands with the World], similar to the title of the theme song of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, *Son-e sonjabgo* 손에 손잡고 [Hand in Hand].[131] Although it is unclear who proposed this Korean title as an alternative to the English one unlike the cases of the first two programs, the change strengthened the project's association with the

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[130] Nam June Paik, "Good Morning is Good Evening," March 1987, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 9, Folder 3); Nam June Paik, "SYNC 21—an arts-sports cocktail," July 20, 1987, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 9, Folder 3); Nam June Paik, "Chip Olympics," c. 1988, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 9, Folder 1); Paik, "Space Rainbow (Wrap Around the World)."

[131] Nam June Paik, "A Korean Cue Sheet of *Wrap Around the World*," c. 1988, Archives of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

Olympics itself, along with the Hodori mascot combined with a planet icon **[Figure 1.21]**. The very act of holding hands with the world signifies the sense of togetherness and festivity immanent within the spirit of the Olympics by embracing cultural diversity and universality in the program. In this context, in addition to this Korean title, I argue that the project's Japanese title, *Furoshiki Tenka* 風呂敷天下, constructs the last grooving gestures of the global connection he proposed through the satellite practice.

Upon finishing his satellite trilogy, Paik produced a limited number of the VHS tapes set, *SAT-ART III: Nam June Paik*, distributed in Japan with support from SONY Corporation **[Figure 1.46]**. According to Brandenburg, who was then the executive producer of the WNET/13 TV Lab and contributed a short essay ("Thoughts on 'Wrap Around the World'") to the booklet, Paik created this limited edition as a sort of souvenir of his project and a gift to the essential production staff.[132] Three videotapes for each broadcast and an edited booklet are contained in a wooden box **[Figure 1.47]**. The closed box is again wrapped with a specially designed black fabric **[Figure 1.48]** so that one package looks like a Japanese lunch box or Korean gift wrapping with *bojagi* (a traditional Korean wrapping fabric). The bandana-like black wrapping cloth is decorated with the illustrations of the first two projects centered on the vertically transcribed title. A cluster of planet icons with Lenin's and Zhou Enlai's faces from the *Wrap Around the World* illustration are scattered over the remaining space.

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[132] Carol Brandenburg, "Nam June Paik and Me," April 2014, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive. https://americanart.si.edu/research/paik/resources/brandenburg (accessed December 15, 2021). Also see Brandenburg, "Thoughts on 'Wrap Around the World.'"

A Japanese art critic and a supervisor of the booklet, Akira Asada describes this VHS set as "a compact gift to the 21st century." Akira Asada, "Jikū no furoshiki mi sateraito āto e no jogen" 時空の風呂敷みサテライト・アートへの序言 [Space-time Furoshiki Preface to Satellite Art], in *SAT-ART III*, 29.

The design concept for the *SAT-ART III* set instantly evokes a sense of mobility and portability, which is apparent in its Japanese title, *Furoshiki Tenka*.[133] In the same manner as *tenseijingo*, this is Paik's compound word of *furoshiki* 風呂敷, meaning a wrapping cloth typically used for gift packages, and *tenka* 天下, meaning the world. In its word-for-word translation into English, *Furoshiki Tenka* is quite well matched with the original title of *Wrap Around the World*. In particular, the first part of the term *furoshiki* condenses an intuitive way in which the VHS set box enacts the idea of connecting to the bigger world. By its presentation, viewers are led to perform a series of everyday actions with the videotapes: putting the tapes into a box, closing the box lid, wrapping the box with a cloth, and carrying the package in their hands. As television and a satellite telecast act as artistic medium to dissolve the physical constraints for Paik, "the wrapper," this compact and transportable satellite set awaits its second round of engagement with the global bodies of the viewers.[134] The Japanese architect who joined *Bye Bye Kipling*, Isozaki used the very term *furoshiki* to describe the ways in which Paik's satellite works produce a porous space. Isozaki says, "When Nam June made a huge wrapping paper to wrap around the world in the satellite telecast, it has a few holes in it, so that we can creep in …"[135] The porosity and creepability found in Isozaki's account imply the entrance, or a *lacuna*, through which spectators actively intervene in the enactment of wrapping the world.

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[133] The characteristics of portability, compactness, and DIY-quality are also relevant to the Fluxus practice, especially George Maciunas's *FluxKit* (1964), a box packed with various small items related to the Fluxus artists, including Paik.

[134] Yuji Takahashi, "Paikurappā" パイクラッパー [Paik Wrapper], in *SAT-ART III*, 39.

[135] Arata Isozaki, "A Robot," 1988, in *eine DATA base*, 177. This one-paragraph blurb is an excerpt from his one-page essay, Arata Isozaki, "Namujyin no dai furoshiki" ナムジィンの大風呂敷 [Nam June's Daifuroshiki], in *SAT-ART III*, 62. '*daifuroshiki* 大風呂敷' means a large-size wrapping cloth.

Paik's single-channel TV sculpture in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums in Cambridge, *Nomad Suitcase* (2004) **[Figure 1.49]**, has conceptual affinity with the *Furoshiki Tenka* video set through their shared mood of transnational movement. In *Nomad Suitcase*, Paik placed an orange suitcase on top of two 20-inch television monitors that play the same moving images, such as abstract geometric patterns and visualized fragmentations from his earlier videotapes. Created two years before his death, this piece radiates a more retrospective sensibility, compared to *Furoshiki Tenka*, exclusive to the satellite projects. As commonly observed in most of his late style works, Paik covered the suitcase with his names and the cities where he had resided in a language of each country: Seoul in Korean, Tokyo in Japanese, Cologne in German, and New York in English. Resembling a passport page filled with multilingual stamps, this symbolic list of his globetrotting footprints signifies the transnational context he had worked in for his entire career as an artist-visionary. The intensified portability and mobility inherent to the material specificity of a suitcase and *Furoshiki Tenka* allude to the idea that the list of sites is not yet final, but still waiting to be filled with more names in the same way Paik had extended the entries of his satellite festivals, from the transatlantic to the East-West and to the entire world—even outer space.

The Paik Archive possesses a series of untitled color drawings with a note stored in a box marked "1996 drawings, Furoshiki Sketchbook." Two of these drawings attract particular attention for their proximity to the satellite series, in addition to the label *furoshiki*. In the simpler drawing, a couple of circle-shaped human faces with a headset are linked to each other via a red line **[Figure 1.50]**. The other piece illustrates a group of five faces whose coils from a headset converge on one point **[Figure 1.51]**. These faces look like circled variations of Paik's TV icon with facial expression, and their round shape lined with the semicircular form of a headset

resembles the planet icons. Under the drawing, Paik transcribed the four-Chinese- character word, *innenbanri* 因縁萬里[理], which is another of his neologisms.[136] The first two letters of the term *innen* 因縁 designate a human relationship or a connection. Literally meaning ten thousand miles, the latter two-letter word *banri* 萬里 is often used to describe an extremely long distance or structure, as in the case of the Great Wall of China, *Wànlǐ Chángchéng* 萬里長城 [the ten thousand miles castle wall]. Together, *innenbanri* can be interpreted as "connection at a long distance." Also, considering that Paik writes "Internet" alongside the phrase in Figure 1.51, *innenbanri* might be his elucidation of the essence of this new global system of interconnection with his own languages.

Here I return to the beginning. Unexpectedly one can find Paik's neologism *innenbanri* in his design for *Untitled Sketch with Notes* **[Figure 1.1]**, which I analyzed at the beginning of this chapter. In the column next to his multilingual signatures, Paik wrote in Japanese characters in a dark blue color, *Tenka(?) bijinto/ innenbanri no/ achisuto ni/ ni sasageru shiro no baka kara* 天下(?)美人と/ 因縁萬理[里]の/ アーチストに/ に捧ゲる白のバカから. I translate this as "From the white fool, who dedicates [it] to the beauty in the world [under the heaven] and the artist(s) in connection at a long distance." Here, "the white fool" (*shiro no baka* 白のバカ) denotes Paik himself, given that the Chinese character of his last name means white (*shiro* 白). Thus, this phrase condenses what he did for his satellite projects, which invited an extended

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[136] For the last letter *ri*, Paik uses two different Chinese characters with the same pronunciation, *ri* 里 and *ri* 理. The former is a distance unit, once widely used in East Asia, and the latter means inner essence, reason, or logic. Paik likely confuses two letters. Although he often uses the latter *ri* 理, the former *ri* 里 makes more sense for his coinage.

community of people and artists to take part in his practice of wrapping the globe based on new media technology, or what he prophetically proposed as "electronic superhighways."

8. Conclusion: Three Tenses of 1984

Paik and his 1984 invaders defined the year 1984 in multiple tenses. A black-and-white print, *Paper with Orwell Inscription* (1983) **[Figure 1.51]**, displays a stanza of four lines in which Ginsberg plays with Orwell's name: "*Ohwell/ oh, well–/ It's only/ 1983*."[137] The inscription stands for the optimistic past when the Orwellian year and its totalitarian normalcy were yet to come. Paik concluded his first script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* with an ambitious declaration, "Twenty First Century will begin on January First 1984 noon by us."[138] This sentence positions his global satellite projects not only at the forefront of the most innovative art of the time but also as the heralds of a new century. If the phrasing of "It's only / 1983" also references by quick acceleration Paik's travels through the experimental stages of repurposing new media technologies, such as TV and video, into an artist's medium, the "January First 1984 noon" makes his turn to art with a satellite a departure into a new century. Thus, I argue that Paik's satellite trilogy marks both the beginning and the conclusion of his artistic inquiry with new media technology, which prompts us to think about why we have lived together so far and how we will live together in the future.

In an essay published after the completion of the satellite trilogy in 1988, "A Satellite— The light of the future Asatte-literally, the day after tomorrow," Paik talked about the future of

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[137] Although this specific print in the Paik Archive does not specify the creator(s), the inscription was handwritten by Ginsberg. The same image that appears in an exhibition brochure includes Ginsberg's sign at bottom right. Brochure for "John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Nam June Paik Print Exhibition" at Won Gallery, Seoul, 1984, the Archives of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

[138] Paik, "First Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*," 9.

his 1984.[139] The title presents his polyglot paronomasia with the word for satellite, pronounced as *a-sa-tte-ra-i-to* in Japanese-accented English. He then parsed this Japanized English pronunciation into two parts—*a-sa-tte* あさって [the day after tomorrow] and *ra-i-to* ライト [light], so that the pair produces a new phrase: "the light of the future [the day after tomorrow]." This essay recounts how serendipity led him to make the *Bye Bye Kipling* telecast happen by pointing out that satellite art sometimes operates via a chain of mutual relationships formed "by chance."[140] I take Paik's reading of a satellite, or "the light of the future," as a conceptual framework for illuminating a set of mutual relations along trans-East Asian circuits of new media art catalyzed by his formal experiments with chance. Focusing on three fundamental axes—reading, body, and connectivity—the subsequent chapters delineate the emergent lines of possibility for our collective futures that Paik imagined in his satellite broadcasts with his global invaders.

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[139] The first part of this essay was written after the broadcasting of *Bye Bye Kipling* on December 15, 1985, and the latter half on April 8, 1987. Paik, "A Satellite—The light of the future Asatte-literally, the day after tomorrow," 15-19.

[140] Ibid., 19.

Chapter Two

The Art of Sensorial Reading

1. Bookless Literature, Paperless Poem

Nam June Paik's essay "Experiments with Electronic Pictures" (1967) avers that computer

technology will revolutionize the human experience of appreciating arts in the immediate future

in the forms of "bookless literature, paperless poem."[141] Radically redefining the medium of art

and the experience it precipitates for viewers, Paik's emphasis on electronic technology promises

an artistic future in terms of material expandability and unprecedently increased accessibility.

Yet, at the same time, the detachment of certain artforms (literature and poetry) from their

material supports (books and papers) entails an inescapable dismantling of conventional reading

practice dependent on an authoritative system of written languages, particularly its forms of

undeletable typed letters on paper.

One significant effort to transfigure operating modes of written languages in contemporary

art has been pushed forward by Japanese media artist and theorist Masaki Fujihata and his

practice with a book that began in *Beyond Pages* (1995–97) **[Figure 2.1]**. In conjunction with the

extended spectrum and festination of social connection from a distance since the mid-1990s, a

decade after Paik demonstrated the existence of a global village through his satellite trilogy,

advanced computer technology has had a pivotal impact on the sensorial transformation of our

media ecology.[142] The multisensory interactive learning system embedded in Fujihata's art of

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[141] Nam June Paik, "Experiments with Electronic Pictures," *Flykingen Bulletin* 2 (1967): 38. Reprinted in *Videa 'n' Videology*, 17.

[142] Fujihata holds a clear memory of watching Paik's global satellite broadcasting series. He watched the recorded version of *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* through his friend in Canada and the live broadcasting of *Bye Bye Kipling* in Japan. Masaki Fujihata, interview with the author, Hong Kong, February 23, 2019.

reading examplifies one historical direction within trans-East Asian circuits of contemporary art that vitalizes the work of art as an enlightening site of post-verbal and post-literal communication.

As Fujihata's version of "bookless literature, paperless poem," *Beyond Pages* was unveiled at "The Future of the Book of the Future," an exhibition held at Keio University's Center for Information in Kanagawa, Japan, in 1995. *Beyond Pages* is a room-sized installation piece that builds an interactive reading unit. A set of props, such as a wooden desk set, a table lamp, a wireless stylus, and projected images of a window, a door, and a girl, occupied 161 square feet of a black cube without a ceiling.[143] This intimate architectural space encourages visitors to navigate and digest new information through animated objects, visual images, linguistic contents, and sound played on a page/screen of a virtual book projected onto a desk. Thus, as "an experimentation as to what exactly would happen if words and images were to interact," Fujihata's reading room functions as a three-dimensional illustrated dictionary or a stereoscopic pop-up storybook.[144] In that this work offers an experience of the technologically remodeled interactions between words and images, visitors are expected to be not only viewers, but also active readers.

As the potential gesture of transcendence that the term "beyond" connotes, *Beyond Pages* deconstructs and demystifies the physical structure of a book and, more critically, the act of reading. A scrupulously designed computer program using Macromedia Director guided each page of Fujihata's virtual book responding to viewer-readers' anticipated bodily reactions for the eight items that appeared on the left page: a pond, an apple, a stone, Japanese characters

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[143] The original plan has a ceiling for making the reading room more private and intimate. Masaki Fujihata, interview with the author, Hong Kong, February 23, 2019.

[144] Masaki Fujihata, "What is Media Art?: Concerning 'Imperfect Reality,'" in *Paik-Orwell Club*, 105.

(*hiragana*), leaves, a switch, a glass of water, and a doorknob. The right pages feature the word representing each item in double rows, English below Japanese.[145] Fujihata devised this virtual book to operate in an intuitive and expected manner. If viewer-readers touch a red apple on a page with a stylus, an invisible someone takes a bite of the apple with a crunching sound. If they tap a power switch on another page, it is flicked on the screen and turns on the lamp on the desk. Depending on the direction of the virtual switch, the actual desk lamp emits either red or green light. Now in the permanent collection of the ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, the latest version of *Beyond Pages* has an added page with an hourglass that activates a clock on the flat wall of the reading room. Simply put, at the very moment when the viewer-reader "touches" a page/screen and learns what an apple is, the arbitrary link placed between an object and its supposed definition(s) is established as a form of signage, information, memory, and knowledge.

From the cliché interior furniture appropriate for reading (a desk, a chair, and a reading lamp in an undisturbed chamber sheltered by four walls), to overlaid pages bearing informative content, to an electronic stylus that enables the audience to turn a page without sensing its digital immateriality, all the settings of *Beyond Pages* register affirmative gestures toward the physical existence of a book to be read and a page to be flipped. Nevertheless, this calculated stage design intended to manifest such physicality of a book betrays our knowledge and expectation of a book and twists the habitual practice of reading. With its sensorial re-enactment of our interaction with the contents of a book page, this work provokes a critical reconsideration of how we read and how human have been disciplined to interact with languages in the digital age. In this sense,

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[145] For the door page, an image of a doorknob appears on the right page and the letter of a door on the left.

Fujihata's playful yet contemplative environment, event, or spectacle calls attention to such a political and aesthetic shift in the canon of text-oriented reading via new media technology.

By attending to the haptic, visual, and kinesthetic ramifications of the sensorial reading in trans-East Asian circuits of new media art that challenge the regime of written text, this chapter explores the works of three contemporary artists who live in Japan, China, and South Korea but work globally. The first section maps out the experimental passage of Fujihata's art of reading from *Beyond Pages* to its transition to an AR-based trilingual catalog project, *Masaki Fujihata* (2016). Through the conceptual lens of technological grammatization, I analyze the tactile aspect of the reading experience in his books of the future. The following sections investigate the ocular and kinesthetic domains of digital reading through two case studies: Chinese artist Xu Bing's ongoing *Book from the Ground* project begun in 2003 and a series of choreographic text animations of Seoul-based artist collective Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (hereafter YHCHI), initiated in 1999.

Conceived and developed within the context of globalizing East Asian new media art practices between the mid-1990s and the mid-2010s, the languages of the future proposed and created by these three artists inspire viewer-readers to reflect on the fundamentally transformed ways of reading and working with "bookless literature, paperless poem." More specifically, the juxtaposition of Fujihata's artistic experiments with those of Xu Bing's and YHCHI's projects showcases the changing modality of bodily engagement with a book and text under the technological and aesthetic conversion of media interfaces from page to screen. Through these interconnected examples, I discuss what role and necessity, if any, written texts retain in the age of digital media culture and press us to radically rethink the possibility of constructing interactive experience that operates beyond languages.

2. The Clefts of Media Realities

Throughout his career with diverse media, from video in the mid-1970s to computer-oriented projects in the more recent past, Fujihata has been considered one of the leading figures of the first generation of Japanese artists who enthusiastically embraced emerging digital technologies as an artistic medium and methodology. The introduction of his acclaimed archival publication *Masaki Fujihata* traces the history of how new media propelled him to excavate still uncharted territories of creativity as an artist. He writes about his intention in making this book: "at first I am enamored with some new form of media, and then inevitably attempt to expose the inherent meaning or nature of its form. If, at the very least, this archive serves to delineate how I mustered the courage to dive into these new forms of media, then it shall have been worth the effort."[146] Thus, this publication, which I will analyze in detail, is focused on mapping out the multi-faceted experimental routes he has followed into to locate the crux of (new) media and its artistic forms.

Fujihata articulates three primary characteristics of media art: its being "artistic expression in which electronic technology act as media," "media-conscious," and "about creating new media."[147] With these clear conceptions, criteria, and aims of making new media of art or art of new media, the artist brought key universal themes of contemporary new media art, such as interactivity, communication, and memory construction, into his art pieces. For instance, one of the most conceptually interesting layers he inserted into *Beyond Pages* is its interactive dimension, in which spectators actively and almost intuitively intervene in the operation of the work of art. Fujihata was intent on engaging in so-called interactive media art and proving why it matters; he knew it could empower audiences to question, alter, and even counter existing modes

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[146] Masaki Fujihata, "A Love for the Visual Arts," in *Masaki Fujihata*, 002, 019.

[147] Fujihata, "What is Media Art?" 111.

of thinking and sensing the world around them. For him, the principal goal of interactive art is to explore "the newly emerging relationship" between art, its audience, and the artist as a medium itself. Media art facilitates a system that incorporates these multiple directions and modalities of interaction.[148] A more specific topic present in Fujihata's *oeuvre* is how art and artists contribute to designing and controlling new agency for the information exchange that is not contingent on existing language systems. How then does such an interactive dimension of new media experience cultivate an alternative communication base that surpasses conventional textual practices and the linear mode of reading in his artistic experiments with a book?

Fujihata employed the terms "imperfection" and "imperfect" to the titles of two critical publications that diagnose the current state of media art especially using computer technology—*Masaki Fujihata: The Conquest of Imperfection, New Realities Created with Images and Media* (2007) and *Imperfect Reality: Experience in Digital Media* (2009).[149] These books also present his outlook on the direction of new media art as desirable aesthetic and sociopolitical paradigms. According to Fujihata, the raison d'être of such a new kind of media art is its drive to disclose the "imperfect" nature of the world whose realities befit the objects of overt and latent "conquest" by the human. He argues that the "clefts" in those "imperfect" realities are what media art ultimately instructs us to know and sense, regardless of its variegated forms and approaches.[150] The "clefts" signify necessary spaces or stages to be "conquered" by the human who controls media technology so that the world looks more "perfect." Given this, the "cleft"

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[148] Fujihata, *Fujihata Masaki: fukanzensa no kokufuku*, 232. Also see Masaki Fujihata, "On Interactivity," in *Hierarchies of Communication: An Inter-institutional and International Symposium on Aspects of Communication on Different Scales and Levels,* eds. Hans H. Diebner and Lehan Ramsay (Karlsruhe: ZKM, 2003), 72-79.

[149] Fujihata, *Fujihata Masaki: fukanzensa no kokufuku*; Fujihata, *Fukanzenna genjitsu.*

[150] Fujihata, *Fujihata Masaki: fukanzensa no kokufuku,* 195.

conceptually corresponds to the "lacuna" I redefined as a generative site of transnational, transcultural, and translinguistic intimacy established in Paik's satellite vision of the globe in Chapter One.

By the same token, I understand this utopian rethinking of "clefts" that Fujihata endeavors to foreground in his body of work as the creative condition for the technological reshaping of post-translational belonging contingent on the ostensibly dissociated linguistic and cultural practices in trans-East Asian circuits of new media art. Like Fujihata's art of reading, Xu Bing's *Books from the Ground* series and YHCHI's Flash video poems attempt to pinpoint those "clefts" of media realities that condition the necessity of the languages of the future for an alternative basis of post-translational communication and the establishment of collective sensibility and knowledge. The act of reading itself builds a wirelessly wired site of communal experience with the conversion in the operational and material foundations from page to screen under the digital revolution especially with computers and network-based platforms. As Fujihata imposingly demonstrated in *Beyond Pages*, the very practice of reading a book is not merely the subjective action of a single reader isolated in a reading room. Rather, it is an interactive process for a collective, much more attached, plural us. Following Fujihata's line of argument, I claim that the act of reading expands its political and artistic potency in the digital wake of globalization in the latter half of the twentieth century.

3. Technological Grammatization and Reading in the Digital Wake

In order to explore the mechanism through which the art of reading and its languages of the future situate us in a more connected realm, I first juxtapose the technological transformation in the act of reading with that of writing given the customary order of the two actions. The term

"grammatization" provides an especially useful conceptual link between these two consecutive events.

According to French philosopher and media theorist Bernard Stiegler, the evolution of the technical supplements with which human beings record their thoughts and the events around them pertains to the experience in and indication of the specific times, ages, or what he calls "epochs" or "territories."[151] It is the technical supplements and artificial tools of writing that direct us to see and understand ourselves externalized in other symbolic forms, which are eventually hardened as memories, information, knowledge, and histories.[152] Articulating the core of human memory as its externalization within technical and technological progress, Stiegler insists that contemporary society makes humankind disoriented. What has accelerated this phenomenon of disorientation is the exceeding power of "the new technological forms of knowledge" engendered from the externalized memories in their functional alteration as supplementary means from mere memory storage (mnemotechniques) to systematically ordered memories (mnemotechnologies). The latter covers electronic media and digital technology that have affected every aspect of human life since the twentieth century, such as television, the computer, the Internet, smartphones, and more. Such technological shifts in the tools, methods, and systems of writing as main memory supports or hypermnesic apparatus not only contribute to the formation of knowledge, but also elevates the risk of its loss "at the very moment one begins speaking of 'knowledge societies,' 'knowledge industries,' and what has become known as 'cognitive' or 'cultural' capitalism."[153]

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[151] Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[152] Bernard Stiegler, "Memory," in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, 64-87.

[153] Ibid., 67.

In so doing, the contemporary transition from mnemotechniques to mnemotechnologies entails the ever-heightened political implications and potentials as the means of memorization on account of such unpredictability in the direction of progress. Stiegler appropriately names this phenomenon "disorientation," which is felt amid the almost overwhelming flux of thoughts and sensations to be written, memorized, and, thus, read.[154] Based on his scrutiny of French paleoethnographer André Leroi-Gourhan's pioneering work, *Memory and Rhythms* (1965), Stiegler also interrelates the industrialization of memory technology with the increasing scale of globalization.[155] By describing such a radical process of disillusion from our collective subjectivity dependent upon physical and provincial boundaries as "deterritorialization," he claims that "the traditionally individualized *who*" must always be understood as the plural "we" positioned beyond the restricted spatiotemporal territories of ethnically identified groups who share a symbolic "habitat," such as gesture and linguistic expressions.[156]

For his theoretical currency to designate a system that externalizes human memories into something writable, Stiegler borrowed the concept of "grammatization" from French linguist Sylvain Auroux's discussion of the history and epistemology of language sciences.[157] Evolved from a lithic tool, ideographic writing, the alphabet to digitalization, a gram (grammé) for Stiegler is the most fundamental unit that characterizes one phase of historical shifts through

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[154] For how disorientation had been generated along with the rapid changes of technical tendency in post-industrial society, see Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 65-96.

[155] Leroi-Gourhan's *Memory and Rhythms* constructs the second volume of *Gesture and Speech* following the first volume, titled *Technics and Language*. André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, trans. Anna Bostock Berger (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993).

[156] Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 90.

[157] An emeritus research director at the Laboratory of the History of Linguistic Theories, France, Sylvain Auroux first used the term "grammatization" in his 1992 book, *The Technological Revolution of Grammatization*. Sylvain Auroux, *La Révolution Technologique de la Grammatisation* (Liège: Mardaga, 1992).

which humankind has developed distinctive ways of knowing and sensing the world. In other

words, such a process of "grammatization" articulates how memories are written and

exteriorized as grams, embracing a wide array of contemporary artifacts and actions that record

something from the past and the present for the future. He defines "grammatization" as

> the process whereby the currents and continuities shaping our lives become discrete
> elements. The history of human memory is the history of this process. Writing, as the
> breaking into discrete elements of the flux of speech (let us invent the word *discretization*
> for this possibility), is an example of a stage in the process of grammatization.[158]

Stiegler's understanding of the act of writing as an example of "grammatization" at a particular

stage of communication technology provokes us to think about how existing systems of

recording, such as signs, symbols, and languages, impact our ways of thinking, sensing, and

relating, especially when we are required to decode something "written" in others' territories.

Japanese semiologist and theorist of informatics Hidetaka Ishida shares Stiegler's attention

to grams as kernels of information technology that indicate spatiotemporal specificity of

contemporary collectivity. Ishida elaborates on the notion of "grammatization" through his two

information semiotic concepts: technological grammatization and the technological unconscious.

By "technological grammatization," he means a new mechanism for controlling the creation of

our consciousness, as new communication devices, such as the telephone, television, and

computer, replace the solely human acts of generating, transmitting, and receiving

information.[159] Technologically generated images become principal agents that govern the way

we recognize the physical reality that forms "clefts" between technology and human

consciousness. An alternative mode of communication emerges in between the graphs,

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[158] Stiegler, "Memory," 70.

[159] Hidetaka Ishida, *Dijiteol midieoui ihae: peullaetpomgwa algorijeumui sidae ikgi* 디지털 미디어의 이해: 플랫폼과 알고리즘의 시대 읽기 [Understanding Digital Media: Reading the Time of Platform and Algorithm], trans. Dae-seok Yun (Seoul: Sahoepyeongnon, 2017), 71.

reconfigured as media technologies (e.g., photography, phonography, and cinematography), and human understanding of the information written and read via those media. Ishida conceptualizes this gap produced between the shifts in communication machines and human cognitive ability to follow such technological transition as "the technological unconscious," which yields and sustains new communication modalities and modern consciousness of the world.[160] To put it succinctly, while the idea of the technological unconscious specifies a conditional underpinning in which "grammatization" becomes technological, technological grammatization provides an operating mode, a system, or a mechanism made possible on the basis of the technological unconscious.

Ishida further addresses the necessity of embracing the idea of media literacy as a critical circuit by which we cope with broad issues relevant to technological grammatization within the digitally reconditioned media environment, particularly since the invention of the computer in the mid-twentieth century. He maintains that "[T]he critique about media operation within media society" requires us to be equipped with the very media technology.[161] As much as technological progress brings about the fundamental changes to the way of "writing" or grammatizing the world, it also affects the practice of "reading" written and grammatized information. Armed with technology, thus, readers are now empowered to critically weave the arbitrary array of selectively externalized grams into meaningful memories and knowledge.

Moreover, Ishida's call to equip ourselves with technology is aligned with the ultimate goal that Fujihata set to achieve through his artistic practice with new media: "objectifying the

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[160] Ibid., 80.

[161] Ibid., 238.

externalized self."[162] This task of building a site of encountering the externalized self through media technology affirms the fact that we, as contemporary beings, are shaped by recognizing our relative positions within the world and our relationships with others. I argue that Fujihata's *Beyond Pages* performs this very task by providing a meditative moments at "clefts," or "space[s] between input and output" in which spectators can reconceive their habitats through "poetic imagination."[163] In the following, I examine how Fujihata's page/screen forges the technological space of the unconscious that fosters critical and creative technological grammatization in order to muse on the externalized, exterritorialized, and, more significantly, deterritorialized—and globalized—self and selves.

4. Masaki Fujihata's Book as a Touch-Activated Archive

4.1. From Reading to Sensing

Beyond Pages repositions its viewer-readers as human agent through the immersive simulacra of a paperless book within which they form "the memory of something other than simply reading a book."[164] In his semiotic reflection on Fujihata's installation, Ishida reads the spectator's act of clicking with an electronic stylus as a decisive moment when the technological unconscious occurs.[165] I interpret this moment of clicking as an essential device or process through which Fujihata discloses the "clefts" of media realities to his viewer-readers. The clicking also catalyzes the sensorial expansion of their act of reading on multiple levels.

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[162] Fujihata, "A Love for the Visual Arts," 002, 019.

[163] Masaki Fujihata, "Toward a Poetics of Interaction," in *Masaki Fujihata*, 006, 013.

[164] Fujihata, "A Love for the Visual Arts," 002, 017.

[165] Hidetaka Ishida, "This is Not a Book on *Beyond Pages*," in *Masaki Fujihata*, 006, 014-043.

On one level, a causal arbitrariness between the clicking and the enactment of the things clicked disrupts the conventionally and cognitively anticipated interplay of signs (words and objects) and the resulting events—the signifier and the signified. What the spectators' bodies touch is a pen, not a piece of paper. What the viewer-readers witness after their first touch is a virtual image of a book that automatically opens its cover page ready to be read, not the conventional action of a pen touching a paper—writing. On another level, this dissociation complicates and even counters the supposed hierarchy that locates viewer-readers in the position of passively chasing the narratives pre-designed by the author, the programmer, or the artist. For instance, in order to play the animation of apple biting in *Beyond Pages*, the image of an unpeeled apple on the left page first demands viewer-readers' action of clicking. They continue touching the image of an apple until nothing remains on the projected page/screen. They may also decide to stop this action and move on to the next page or go back to the previous one by simply tapping the lower margin of this virtual book. Without the chain of clicking interventions by the viewer-readers, the embedded formulation that binds the signifier to the signified cannot be fully enacted. Ishida points out the "physical, discontinuous, discursive" aspect of this act of clicking by saying that "We feel as though we have direct access to the sign, direct access to the event."[166] In that physical dimension, Fujihata's reading becomes tangible and, therefore, random events out of the writer's control of the sign-event equation. This sensorially reorganized practice of reading confers an autonomy on the spectators to conceive and perceive a thing on their own fashion rather than inertly accept the settled formula of a thing with its connotations. I insist that such a pseudo-haptic layer, which Fujihata added to *Beyond Pages*, is crucial to

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[166] Ibid., 033.

expanding the notion of reading in a sensorial sense. To discuss this aspect further, it would be beneficial to consider a viewer-reader's point of view.

In her book about the history of video art, former MoMA curator of video art Barbara London details her personal experiences inside the sensoryscape of Fujihata's "large book" at "The Future of the Book of the Future" exhibition:

> I entered a cozy room, where what appeared to be a large book with blank pages lay open on a table. I approached and sat down on the one available chair. Then, I ran my fingers over the virtual book as if it were a touch screen and spontaneously began turning the pages that had appeared. The movement of my fingers had triggered an overhead projector to cast coquettishly romping words over the page. When I flipped to another virtual page, another cluster of words was set in motion. Meanwhile, on the wall directly in front of me, a life-size projection of a screen door emitted the bright outdoor light of a fine summer day, accompanied by the sound of chirping cicadas. Suddenly the screen door swung open, and a young girl peeked in, as if she were about to join me in the room. There was a truly magical moment in this stunning work when she giggled and left.[167]

Activated by simple motions with her fingertips, which precede our haptic practices with smartphones and tablet computers that prevail nowadays, *Beyond Pages* animates written characters by playing a set of actions they symbolize on multiple sensory layers. In addition to the material implication of "a large book," London's descriptive wordings, such as "coquettishly romping words," "set in motion," "the bright outdoor light of a fine summer day," "the sound of chirping cicadas," and "giggled," allude to the significance of the viewer-reader's synesthetic feelings and somatic perception of the events that complete the reading as a performative program. It is London's physical contact with a given communicative device (a virtual book and an electronic stylus) that initiates the conversion of data fed into a computer into culturally coded contents that await the viewer-reader's access. The very act of reading reemerges as a haptic object through the spectator's sensory attachment to the work of art, raising pressing questions of

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[167] London, *Video Art*, 199.

how human bodily encounters with historical materials and data have been changed in the wake

of digitalization. How do we access documents and interact with the stories from the past if they

no longer exist as physical objects, books, and papers? What aesthetic, social, and political

connotations does such digitalization of reading hold?

The ways in which Fujihata's new media artworks spawn a diversity of formats and

platforms for preserving memories and reconstructing them as a form of "readable" and

"sensible" knowledge relate to the practice of archiving. Conventional processes of archiving,

such as collecting, classifying, preserving, retrieving, analyzing, and sharing historical materials,

have undergone swift digitalization through photocopying, scanning, and database technologies.

Since the mid-1990s, when Fujihata began to imagine and experiment with "the future of the

book of the future," his art of sensorial reading has pointed toward the haptic rematerialization,

especially in the form of an archival book, which allows us to glimpse into "the future of the

archive of the future."

4.2. Haptic Rematerialization of Reading

In 2016 Fujihata published *Masaki Fujihata* **[Figure 2.2]** as a corpus of his artistic practices and

writings that cover three decades of his career since the mid-1970s. In order to access the media

contents of this publication, such as videos and 3D models of the actual installations, the reader

needs a personal media player, such as a smartphone or a tablet computer, and a mobile

application. Thus, this publication absorbs the characteristics of a monograph, a catalogue

raisonné, an artist archive, an artist's website, and even an artist's channel on an online video

sharing platform. Ostensibly looking like a paper book, *Masaki Fujihata* exemplifies "the future

of the archive of the future" by rematerializing the tactile dimension of our interaction with a book and its contents.

One of the most striking features of Fujihata's multifunctional publication is its enhanced portability thanks to its hand-held size and structure with a set of detachable units. In terms of compactness and mobility, this book evokes Paik's aesthetic of *furoshiki* 風呂敷. As I explained in Chapter One, the term *furoshiki* derives from *Furoshiki Tenka* 風呂敷天下, the Japanese title of Paik's VHS tape set, *SAT-ART III: Nam June Paik* **[Figures 1.46–1.48]**. By the aesthetic of *furoshiki*, I mean the elevated autonomy of the spectators who can "creep" into the "clefts" or lacunae of the documentation or data of artworks that are large enough for bodily exploration.[168] At the same time, *furoshiki* refers to what is small enough to manage by hand and adapt to the respective environment of its presentation. *Masaki Fujihata* crystalizes the tactile dimension of the aesthetic of *furoshiki* and its transition into a virtual archive because it is armed with the most up-to-date computing technologies and media devices that the artist leverages to address new technological conditions for reading.

Fujihata's ambitious archive project involves the task of redefining our reading experience through embedded AR technology operated on iOS devices and thus establishes itself as an interactive art object. *Masaki Fujihata* comprises a sixth of *anarchive*, a series of interactive media-based archive publications each dedicated to a contemporary artist, including Antoni Muntadas (b.1942), Michael Snow (b.1928), Thierry Kuntzel (b.1948), Jean Otth (1940–2013), Fujiko Nakaya (b.1933), and Peter Campus (b.1937). The French curator and art critic Anne-Marie Duguet and her non-profit organization based in Paris, *anarchive*, have coordinated and published this archive series since 1999. The term *anarchive* manifests the aim and essence of

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[168] Isozaki, "A Robot," 177.

the larger cataloging project that embodies "a historical and critical approach" and provokes the artists to make their archive into a new artwork through digital techniques.[169] As an innovative method of historicizing and appreciating works of art, the *anarchive* series pulls together much more accessible experiences of contemporary art often considered remote from quotidian life and unsuitable for collecting, preserving, and appreciating in a conservative sense of cataloging, such as performance, public art, installation, video, and other time-based media arts. Employing diverse digital technology that mines and consults contemporary art archives, the *anarchive* project seeks to entice both artists and readers to discover unforeseen links among the archived pieces or within the database. Furthermore, because the chosen artist holds a position of absolute authority over their project, conceptualizing, designing, and directing the whole process of archiving, each of the *anarchive* productions stands for "an original artwork."[170] As an artwork in and of itself, Fujihata's collaboration with Duguet's *anarchive* in *Masaki Fujihata* marks a significant juncture in his evolving practice to sensorially redefine the act of reading after *Beyond Pages*.

Two decades removed from *Beyond Pages*, Fujihata's anthological publication with *anarchive* accumulates his critical standpoints toward the changing roles of existing language systems as a primary vehicle of knowledge acquisition and transmission. The language, for him, denotes something "we probably forget in the 21st century," as he finds the most radical aspect of new media art in its capacity to reconstruct and memorize human experience without recourse to any verbal means.[171] Given that the *anarchive* series is targeted at global readers and

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[169] See the *anarchive* website, http://www.anarchive.net/indexeng.htm (accessed December 15, 2021).

[170] Ibid.

[171] Masaki Fujihata, "Cheheomeul tonghan sotongjeok sanghojagyong."

international distribution, *Masaki Fujihata* relies on trilingual texts of French, Japanese, and English. One fascinating feature of reading (and viewing) this publication is the increased sovereignty of users supported by the multiple interfaces that facilitate access to this compact but immense virtual archive.

Masaki Fujihata resurrects the intimate reading room of *Beyond Pages* on a paper book page in a literal sense without sacrificing three-dimensionality. The publication consists of a brown cardboard box for the cover and an inner folder with a three-ring steel binder, both sized as 9-inch squares. Instead of the traditional form of sewn or glued book bindings, which is inseparable and has limited foliation, seventeen individual booklets with their own pagination comprise Fujihata's catalog. The first booklet (table of contents) and the last one (chronology of the artist) have an accordion style so that a long piece of paper can be horizontally unfolded. Each of the fifteen main booklets functions as a lightweight mini book or fascicle devoted to one of his past projects or one theme. Because each booklet is titled only by a three-digit number, such as 000 and 001, it avoids the compositional convention with the four steps toward the definite conclusion. Thanks to this flexible filing system, the readers can easily detach a particular chapter from the steel ring binder, rearrange the order of the booklets, and even tack on additional chapters, notes, or other relevant materials. With the potential for intervention passed over to the readers, this customizable publication breaks out from the rigid structure of a linear-narrative book and develops an organic system of open-ended archiving.

Most of the main booklets of *Masaki Fujihata* are split into two parts. While the first part shows critical essays penned by Fujihata and other writers, the following appendix made in a

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체험을 통한 소통적 상호작용 [Communicative Interaction through Experiences], in *Midieoateu: yesurui choejeonseon* 미디어아트: 예술의 최전선 [Media Art: The Avant-garde of Art], ed. Jungkwon Chin (Seoul: Humanist, 2009), 217.

folded thick paper contains color illustrations of a specific work and its model design. What the readers find under these images is a small smartphone-shaped marker with a play button drawn on its screen **[Figure 2.3]**. For this catalogue raisonné the artist developed an AR-based mobile application, "*Masaki Fujihata* Anarchive 6," which runs video recordings, live documentations, or 3D models of each work when users match their iPad, iPhone, or iPod camera with the markers that appear in the appendix or chronology. All of these embedded still and moving images can be viewed either in the rectangular frame popped up from a page or in full-screen mode. This AR system makes the reading experience more manageable and personalized, speckled and dilated by each viewer-reader through their preferred setting, including light type, luminosity, volume, angle, scale, duration, and selected mobile devices. With this added participatory layer, this catalogue raisonné functions as a performative work of art.

In the sixth chapter devoted to *Beyond Pages*, for example, the marker on the left page leads to playing a three-minute-and-thirty-second video on a chosen mobile device. In the video, Fujihata introduces the original work inside the real exhibition context. Shot from his back toward the tabletop on which the pages are projected, this taped demonstration makes the audience feel like they are the ones touching the screen with an electronic stylus instead of the artist. The virtual book he explains in the first video becomes doubly virtual through the second marker on the right page, which displays a simplified 3D model installation of the piece **[Figure 2.4]**. The viewer-readers then spot the same book placed on the table in the middle of this augmented room enclosed by white walls and floor instead of the black interior of the original work. This color change assists in prompting the viewer-readers to focus on the book. Once the viewer-reader's tap flips the book cover, the book is transformed into a mini screen that displays another video that stops at some points and resumes playing with another tap. This video played

on the augmented screen is a prerecorded demonstration of the original *Beyond Pages* embedded in its respective AR marker in the catalog book. Yet, the calculated intervals between each page intend to give viewer-readers a certain degree of controlling power to progress this reading event at their own pace. They can terminate it by simply tapping the exit button. They can also change the angle or the size of the virtual page-screen with simple motions using a thumb and an index finger. In a similar manner, viewer-readers can simulate the rest of the archived works by tapping the virtual pages floating on the screen with their fingertips. In this way, the migration from the act of "clicking" in the original installation of *Beyond Pages* to the "tapping" on portable devices "beyond" the pages of *Masaki Fujihata* reinforces the haptic interactivity of the reading experience and breaks from the unilateral routine we enact with a paper book.

Thanks to his unceasing devotion to AR technology, Fujihata's art of haptic reading has been further stretched from the book into the realm of the historical archive and from technophiles or art lovers who are willing to buy an artist's book to the public on the street. Staged throughout the city center of Hong Kong Island, his public art project *Be Here* (2018) **[Figure 2.5]** assigned the spectator to an interpolating role in portraying the world much closer to a perfect state. Commissioned by Design District Hong Kong (DDHK), organized by Hong Kong Design Center, and produced by Osage Art Foundation, *Be Here* was a part of Fujihata's solo show, "Being Parallel," held at Osage Gallery in 2018–19. Using the word "parallel" in the exhibition title, he urges the audience to ruminate on how humans as analog bodies should live in parallel with the surrounding digital condition, not passively encroached by its Big Brother-like ubiquity. Fujihata contends that this is the reality in which we are now living and the reality that all cutting-edge technologies, from VR, AR, MR (Mixed Reality) to XR (Extended Reality), seek to visualize. Concretized within such a hyper-accelerated technological shift from one

digitally represented reality to another or their cohabitation, his *Be Here* project aids

contemporary beings for whom digital technologies are ingrained in their daily practices to see

the human side of all those interfacing experiences.[172]

 Be Here is a site-specific interactive work that parallels spectators with the scenes of Hong

Kong from the past through their touch of a screen. In the same way as the book *Masaki*

Fujihata, *Be Here* operates on an AR application "BeHere_HKACT!" designed both for iOS-

and Android-based smartphones and tablet computers. By scanning the AR markers Fujihata

placed on ten public landmarks installed along Queen's Road East Street via the application,

spectators can encounter various augmented life scenes of Hong Kong in its heyday between the

1940s and 1970s. In order to refabricate those scenes from the past for this project, Fujihata and

his team consulted extensive amounts of archival materials that document ordinary dynamics on

the Wan Chai streets and interviewed older residents. He hired a dozen of local actors to reenact

imagined stories based on research, which were then converted into three-dimensional images

that pop up on the augmented screen of a chosen mobile device. Following a guide map that

begins at Blue House and ends at Dominion Garden, spectators embark on an excursion to

engage with the life of Hongkongers from a bygone era animated through a kaleidoscope of

pictures.

 Fujihata positions spectators of *Be Here* not as mere observers but as active participants in

story-making by providing "clefts" through which they can enter into historical scenes across

time. Not only can the spectators see those mundane scenes levitated on their mobile screen, but

they can also take a snapshot as a souvenir. Spectators can manipulate the picture in a DIY

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[172] Masaki Fujihata, "Being Parallel," October 21, 2018. https://www.hkact.hk/beingparallel (accessed December 15, 2021).

fashion. They are encouraged to rotate and scale the image by using their touch screen with finger motions and with selections of three-dimensional figures from the past that they want to pose together, such as groups of children gathered in the Wan Chai Gap Road Playground, village elders reading a newspaper outside the Old Wan Chai Post Office, and mothers washing clothing in the Lun Fat Street Sitting-out Area.[173] Spectators perceive their own analog bodies in the augmented digital realities from the past, which are also paralleled and intersected with the vibrant atmosphere of contemporary Wan Chai. Through such magical, immersive wandering, *Be Here* overlays different space-times into one present moment on one surface of a tangible screen. With a simple touch, the screen opens a site for the spectators to actively partake in processes of memory and history.

As computers replace analog print techniques in the contemporary book publishing industry, pages of books we touch for reading are no longer transcribed by a hand nor printed by letterpresses, also primarily handled by human bodies. Fujihata's art of reading in *Beyond Pages* and *Masaki Fujihata* gives rise to an emphatic resurrection of sensory elements and bodily involvement within the context of a book through its digital nature created via computer programming. Such a heightened tactile dimension through technological interfaces catalyzes the so-called Barthesian moment of "the death of the author" in an extended context that emphasizes the individual reader's active reception rather than the intention of the artist.[174]

Hence, I read Fujihata's works as an exploration of a new media-enabled sensorial-scape of communication systems instead of a radical manifestation of the end of the letter, gram, text,

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[173] For the *Be Here* project, see the project's official website, http://behere.hkact.hk/about/ (accessed December 15, 2021).

[174] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. and ed. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Wang; London, Fontana, 1977), 142-48.

or any other kind of written language component. Here, I am not asserting that the artist provides a ground-breaking method or an impeccable alternative to printed book culture and text-reliant reading practices. Yet, the significance of his projects, developed from *Beyond Pages* through the *anarchive* catalog to *Be Here*, resides in their provoking the imagination of much more reachable and participatory platforms by multiplying the sensory channels by which human knowledge and emotion are transmitted and exchanged in the act of reading. A space of the technological unconscious emerges in this process of aesthetic, cognitive, and performative twisting of the act of reading. Now sensorially empowered spectators can rethink how the existing language system is structured to critically serve the discriminatory, fundamentally unequal powers of text-oriented communication, particularly under the ever-expanding digital condition of globalization.

5. Xu Bing's *Book from the Ground* and the Ocular Algorithm of Post-Translational Communication

5.1. From Nobody to Everybody

While Fujihata's virtual and augmented books are completed by the viewer-reader's haptic intervention, Xu Bing's books point directly toward reconsidering notions of translation and post-translation in pursuit of the fall of the Tower of Babel by harnessing our shared visual experiences. For his multi-decade of experimentation that changed from brushes to computers, from Chinese drawing papers to computer screens, from invention to collection, and from nobody (sky) to everybody (ground), Xu Bing has endeavored to assert the limitation of the existing systems of languages. The ongoing *Book from the Ground* (2003–) project reflects his efforts to establish much more universal, equitable, and stable modes of communication

grounded in our communal ocular sensibility that embrace broader groups of people beyond geographic, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic detachment from others. *Book from the Ground* orients toward and intends a "global" project from the outset through "the imagined semiotic unity of mankind."[175] This work epitomizes another crucial East Asian model of sensorial reading that aims to forge a post-translational ground of global intimacy.

Whether in fake Chinese characters or calligraphically rearranged Roman alphabets, written forms of languages have served as the most persistent and central theme for Xu Bing's works of art since the mid-1980s, such as *Book from the Sky* (1987–91) **[Figure 2.6]**, *Square Word Calligraphy* projects (1994–) and *Landscripts* series (1999–) to list just a few. For instance, one of his early masterpieces, *Book from the Sky*, displays a colossal spectacle of four hand-bound volumes; he painstakingly packed each page with angular-shaped characters using the technique and format of traditional Chinese book arts. Printed on papers elegantly draped from the ceiling, attached to the wall panels, and unfurled on the gallery floor, these thousands of Chinese-looking characters are, in fact, the pure invention of the artist, defying conventional rules for arranging strokes to compose a single letter and thus containing no function of signification, description, and communication.[176] Through these unreadable languages that reach nobody, *Book from the Sky* contests universal assumptions about the effectiveness of written

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[175] Christopher Hutton, "A New Writing System? Xu Bing's Visual Language," in *It Begins with Metamorphosis*, 135.

[176] As Xu Bing's most widely exhibited piece since its 1988 debut at China Art Gallery, Beijing, China, *Book from the Sky* has received extensive scholarly attention. See, for example, Wu Hung, "A 'Ghost Rebellion': Notes on Xu Bing's 'Nonsense Writing' and Other Works," *Public Culture* 6, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 411-18; Hajime Nakatani, "Imperious Griffonage: Xu Bing and the Graphic Regime," *Art Journal* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 6-29; Erickson, *The Art of Xu Bing*, 32-45; Roger T. Ames, "Reading Xu Bing's *A Book from the Sky*: A Case Study in the Making of Meaning," in *Xu Bing and Contemporary Chinese Art*, 33-65; Kuan-Hung Chen, "Seriousness, Playfulness, and a Religious Reading of *Tianshu*," in *Xu Bing and Contemporary Chinese Art*, 67-94.

characters for understanding the world. Xu Bing's original title for this work, *A Book That Analyzed the World*, also ironically implies such non-sensibility of letter-based language.[177] Adapting the title of this provocative work and inheriting its critical question about what Hajime Nakatani calls "the graphic regime," *Book from the Ground* signifies a climacteric juncture in Xu Bing's artistic exploration of the languages of the future.[178] This work revamps the ability to write (speak) and read (listen) simultaneously without the aid of human interpreters or translators. Contrary to *Book from the Sky*, which makes all the readers feel disparate and foreign, *Book from the Ground* reflects Xu Bing's striving to reach everybody.

Driven by the variety of the signs and symbols discovered in airplane safety manuals and international airport signage during international travels, Xu Bing conceived a universal language system primarily based on the shared visual experience of its users regardless of the level of their education with "any pre-existing text-based knowledge."[179] The essential condition for attaining higher legibility for his pictographic writing system used in *Book from the Ground* pertains to the degree of readers' exposure to contemporary lifestyles and their cognitive familiarity with its symbols. As the artist addresses, such an emphasis on the ability to recognize specific visual information results from his steadfast adherence to communal efforts to promote a system structured through three principles—collection, organization, and formatting of pre-existing symbols—rather than the desire for "inventing" a novel system by one genius

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[177] Janelle S. Taylor, "Non-Sense in Context: Xu Bing's Art and Its Publics," *Public Culture* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1993): 324. For the issue of translating the Chinese title of *Book from the Sky*, also see Wu Hung, "A 'Ghost Rebellion,'" 411.

[178] Nakatani defines "the graphic regime" as "the world conceived as writing, a cosmo-graphy in the literal sense of the writing of the cosmos." Nakatani, "Imperious Griffonage," 8.

[179] Xu Bing, *XU Bing: Book from the Sky to Book from the Ground*, 123.

individual.[180] By collecting and processing a variety of the existing visual languages through

database technology and an information management system, *Book from the Ground* seeks to

transcend constraint in translingual conversation. For the post-translational promise his project

might actualize, Xu Bing declares, "This is the culture! A universal language that surpasses the

limitation of the written word has been born."[181] With the firm refusal of any single hegemonic

language or hierarchy among different national languages, his navigation of a genuinely reliable

system of universal language or meta-language reverberates the utopian imagination and sense of

optimism embodied in the McLuhanesque notion of the global village or Paik and John

Godfrey's televisual requiem for collapsed national boundaries in *Global Groove* **[Figure 1.5]**.

More specifically, Xu Bing's pursuit of the universal lingo in *Book from the Ground*

conceptually resonates with Dr. Mobius's omnipotent translating machine, the interlocator,

which appeared in Paik's last satellite program, *Wrap Around the World* **[Figure 1.34]**. In the

show, the alien character Dr. Mobius uses the portable interlocator to understand all the different

human languages and communicate with Earthians without limit. In this respect, I claim that

Book from the Ground allows us to envisage one way the interlocutor, if it truly exists, would

operate to condense linguistic distances beyond one's habitual living territories through the

ocular algorithm to process visual information equal to everyone.[182]

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[180] Ibid., 133.

[181] Kaimei Olsson Wang, "Conversation from the Ground in Shanghai: Xu Bing & Mian Mian," in *The Book about Xu Bing's Book from the Ground*, 142.

[182] With the creation of the *Book from the Ground* series, much has been focused on its relationship with *Book from the Sky*. For example, see Kuiyi Shen and Julia F. Andrews, "Viewers as Performer: A Cognitive Journey from Xu Bing's *Tianshu* to *Dishu*," in *It Begins with Metamorphosis*, 59-71; Borysevicz, *The Book about Xu Bing's Book from the Ground*; Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky to Book from the Ground*.

5.2. The Ocular Algorithm for the Interlocator

Exclusively written in pictograms, symbols, logos, emblems, and icons Xu Bing compiled over years from multiple sources and diverse fields that use visual signage, *Book from the Ground* has been developed into a multi-platform project that confronts the supremacy of alphabet-based language systems in book or other text-based media and communications. He introduced the initial version of *Book from the Ground* in a manner of a participatory installation at the 2007 MoMA exhibition, "Automatic Update," curated by London **[Figure 2.7]**. Bisected by an acrylic panel that displays lines of exemplary pictographic text, his two computer stations led the visitors to sit, read the story written on both sides of the dividing panel, and type a message using a keyboard. An icon editing software—what he called a "font library"—enables them to see the process by which their typed messages are converted into Xu Bing's "language of icons."[183] What appears on the computer screen are the lines of pictographs selected from Xu Bing's database that respectively refer to the typed English or Chinese sentences.

In addition to the editing program, Xu Bing created software that allows a live chat between two persons who type in different languages (Chinese and English) utilizing his icon database. While these two translating software programs run on a computer, any information users input by hitting letters and special characters on a keyboard is displayed on the computer screen in pictographic vocabulary. Two images captured from a chat **[Figure 2.8]** illustrate how this translation works via the computer program, "Word Magick," credited to Xu Bing Studio (2006). The left window shows three lines of pictograms converted from English text typed in box below (He loves her, he wants to give her a flower. / He went in the coffee shop and asked

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[183] Xu Bing, "Regarding *Book from the Ground*," 2006. https://wayback.archive-it.org/4387/20140616220633/http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2007/automatic_update/subs_wrapper.php?section=xubing_interview.html (accessed December 15, 2021).

for a coffee. He paid for the coffee, took it and sat down. / he is sending her a letter). On the right side, the same set of pictographs appear in the main window, translated into simplified Chinese in the lower box (他爱她，他想送给她一朵花。/ 他去咖啡店叫了一杯咖啡。 付钱后，拿着咖啡坐了下来。/ 他给她寄了一封信。). While each user writes (or types) in different alphabets, they see and read identical contents. The essential ability for spectators to successfully use this translating system depends on how quickly and completely they can decode the visual signs that pop up on screen. This operating structure, in turn, discloses how intensely they live as members of the global modern and postmodern world irrespective of their mother tongue.

The operation of our ocular sensibility to immediately recognize those visually transliterated grams is deeply enmeshed with the argument that the act of reading technologically grammatized information becomes a more sensory experience in global digitalization, at least in the realm of the visual. A computational intervention in interlanguage conversation produces an alternative algorithm for how we recognize a thing determined by the scope of our visual knowledge. By prioritizing one's visual experience and sensibility trained and shared within global modern and postmodern life over linguistic literacy, therefore, *Book from the Ground* subverts the existing structure of language translation grounded in difference between languages.

 In "Regarding *Book from the Ground*," an essay published on the "Automatic Update" exhibition website in 2006, Xu Bing writes that his translation program is in its beginning stages and far from perfection, particularly given its limited access only by English- and/or Chinese-language users: "Yet, one cannot judge the potential of a language based on its current level of expressiveness. Instead one should consider its possibilities as a language of the future, and

whether its linguistic DNA allows for its continued growth."[184] The significance of this project, as stated by the artist, derives from its bourgeoning potential as "a language of the future" whose subjects are no longer the nation-states but the whole world. On this account, I suggest the term *ocular algorithm* to name Xu Bing's post-translational language of the future projected in *Book from the Ground*.

In a general sense, an algorithm is a strategy for solving problems and constructing knowledge through two key components of logic and control.[185] In a narrower sense, it refers to a way of carrying out a task using programming languages, especially by a computer. But algorithms are also understood as a philosophical concept or a cultural discourse since they mediate between software and the world and between programs and material things by mirroring period-specific sociocultural conventions and attitudes. Cultural studies theorist Andrew Goffey compares algorithms with natural languages whose structure is hardly formalized as a self-sufficient system. In contrast to natural language, with algorithms "formalization comes first, the express aim being to divorce (formal) expression from (material) content completely."[186] Combining the concept of the algorithm with the ocular, I accentuate the ways in which Xu Bing's project "controls" visual stimuli into a post-translational "logic" of interactive formation. As one of the larger *Book from the Ground* projects, *From Point to Point* (2003–12) displays how the *ocular algorithm* of post-translational communication works in Xu Bing's art of sensorial reading.

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[184] Ibid.

[185] Robert Kowalski, "Algorithm = Logic + Control," *Communications of the ACM* 22, no.7 (July 1979): 424-36.

[186] Goffey begins his chapter with Robert Kowalski's well-known formula of and statement on algorithms, "Algorithm = Logic + Control." Andrew Goffey, "Algorithm," in *Software Studies: A Lexicon*, ed. Matthew Fuller (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 15-20.

From Point to Point is a graphic novel describing twenty-four hours in the life of the protagonist, Mr. Black.[187] Possessing its own international standard book number (ISBN), *From Point to Point* is "a book that even on its copyright page does not use a single traditional word and can be published anywhere in the world without translation."[188] According to Xu Bing, readers of *From Point to Point* perceive the flows of pictograms assorted from his database. These pictograms compose a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter, and a story. The front cover of this publication shows only five black bold icons on a white background **[Figure 2.9]**. Each of these icons matches five words comprising its title: a point, a right arrow, a male body, a right arrow, and a point. From the table of contents noting twenty-four main chapters (one chapter for each hour of Mr. Black's day), to the publication information, the succeeding pages are also "grammatized" solely in Xu Bing's selected pictograms and Arabic numerals.

In that Xu Bing creates plots and delivers messages through arranged clusters of pictorial signs and symbols, *From Point to Point* holds an aesthetic and visual similarity with Paik's television and planet icons that repeatedly emerge in his graphic drawings and print works, exemplified by *Key to the Highway* **[Figure 1.2]**. The works of both artists reveal a shared artistic attentiveness to and vision for pictographs as having a transmissible function in translingual communication. Yet, Xu Bing's book further concretizes such potential as a more objectified, communalized, and systematized program of the languages of the future in three aspects. First, as *From Point to Point* shows, his writing program builds narratives based on the elements that evoke the reader's sympathy and successfully appeal to global readers. Such an

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[187] Xu Bing, *Book from the Ground: From Point to Point* (North Adams, MA: Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013). On the production process and presentation of this book, see Borysevicz, *The Book about Xu Bing's Book from the Ground*.

[188] Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky to Book from the Ground*, 123.

enlarged readership, regardless of the reader's primary language, indicates the utility and necessity of this program. Second, Xu Bing only uses visual symbols already widely circulated in various contexts of contemporary ways of life. There is no invention of his own like the illegible Chinese characters of *Book from the Sky*, which signals a certain degree of validity, reliability, and legitimacy of this program as a universal language. Lastly, he endeavors to find an additional way to communicate, not commanding users to abandon their mother languages completely. It allows us to preserve specificity and diversity at the same time by respecting each culture. Therefore, the technological grammatization experimented with by Xu Bing, whose semantic efficacy is demonstrated through the publication of *From Point to Point*, suggests that his language of the future has been more advanced than prior attempts for contriving universal lingoes or international auxiliary languages (IAL), such as Esperanto and Ido.

Xu Bing algorithmizes how we visualize the world in the same way as other people do. His *ocular algorithm*-based communication system provides a new model for technologically "grammatizing" human experience. It also instructs us to reconceive ourselves as contemporary collective beings who witness the same things and thus are connected across the national barriers of languages. However, it is also undeniable that Xu Bing's model of a language of the future overtly relies on such an optimistic premise of post-translational collectivity. Thus, it tends to disregard alerts about the potential risk of miscommunication and disconnection, which are somehow inevitable under the digital media condition that is still undetermined and constantly changing. The precarity of human interaction dependent on digital technologies is left unconcealed in the Internet-based artworks of YHCHI, who has contrived another system of sensorial reading.

6. Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries' Kinesthetic Texts

6.1. From Page to Screen

As the titles of their works suggest, the rhetoric of a book—more specifically its orthodox format

in print on hard paper—is the conceptual seed from which both Fujihata's *Beyond Pages* and Xu

Bing's *Book from the Ground* resystematize the process of post-translational communication.

These works still retain the idea of a page or texts written in the form of a book, even if it is

metaphorical or virtual. However, the edges of the page are literally evaporated and converted

into a computer screen or even beyond that physical boundary in the body of YHCHI's

"bookless literature, paperless poem" that constructs a counterexample to Fujihata's and Xu

Bing's books.

Consisting of CEO Young-Hae Chang from South Korea and Marc Voge, a CIO from the

U.S., the artist duo YHCHI has created a series of Adobe Flash animations that compose

audiovisual verse or textual performances in about seventeen different languages to sounds of

percussion beats, brass, jazz piano, tango and bossa nova, electronic music, and computerized

voice-over since 1999.[189] As the group mentions, their works embrace the characteristics of

"digital animation, motion graphics, experimental video, i-movies, and e-poetry." But they prefer

the term "Web art."[190] Although they deny any political intentions in making art, many of their

works deal with broad-ranging issues and fantasies of contemporary society in a cynical yet

humorous tone—sometimes highly time-sensitive themes (*C.D.C. Warns of Aggressive People*

Searching for Food During Shutdowns), sometimes personal experiences (*Honeymoon in*

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[189] Up until December 2021, YHCHI has produced their works in Korean, English, Ukrainian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, Galego, Russian, Swedish, Turkish, Italian, Malayalam, and Arabic.

[190] Swiss, "'Distance, Homelessness, Anonymity, and Insignificance.'"

Beppu), and sometimes art and literature inspired thoughts (*The Art of Sleep* and *Dakota*). I argue

that the political nature of YHCHI's web art, if there is any, proceeds from its form of delivering

content rather than the content itself.

Uploaded on their artist website, "Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries Presents"

(www.yhchang.com), the works of YHCHI are written only in capital letters and Monaco font

(they use the number zero in place of the alphabetical O). The choreographed texts streaming on

a plain background of a computer screen aesthetically echo hard-edge canvases with a bold color

contrast that appeals to viewers' optical sensations or Barbara Kruger's (b.1945) white text-on-

red ground pieces that accentuate messages. In some cases, looped film footage or photographic

still images supplant the monochrome backgrounds. By playing on the perimeters of the

conventional structure for experiencing literary and artistic communication through written

languages, the text-based works of YHCHI also forge "clefts" or lacunae along with their

ontological migration from page to screen.

Published in 2013 as a result of YHCHI's artist residency at Kadist Art Foundation in San

Francisco, *Pacific Limn* **[Figure 2.10]** is a book that literally embodies the transition from a page

to a screen. This twelve-page volume is circulated online and freely downloadable to personal

digital devices via the Apple Books application.[191] A photo of a traditional form of a book bound

with sky blue colored fine cloth appears on the first and last page, functioning as the covers of

Pacific Limn. Faded color, worn-out edges, and water stains over the covers generate an illusion

of this pictured book as if it is physically placed in somebody's bookshelf. But closer observation

reveals that these pages are computer-generated images. The white text on the front cover—the

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[191] YHCHI's *Pacific Limn* is available to download to any iOS-based personal device at
https://books.apple.com/us/book/pacific-limn/id704641078?ls=1 (accessed December 15, 2021).

name of the creator, the title, and the logo of the publication company—is input, not printed. The subsequent page/screen shows a picture of a black pistol hidden in a sunken space made of carved papers **[Figure 2.11]**. Once the reader clicks (or touches) the image of this pistol, it suddenly turns into a video screen that plays a trailer for YHCHI's site-specific piece, *Pacific Limn* (2013) **[Figure 2.12]**. After screening the seventy seconds of the trailer, the book returns to the images of inner pages with short texts, such as an afterword by curators and credit information. The pages readers actually read are visual and textual information technologically grammatized and only accessed through specific digital platforms (Apple Store and Apple Books) and media devices (iMac, MacBook, iPad, iPod, and iPhone). The inserted short text-film, with dynamic movements and sensory effects, declares such an irreversible change in the mode of our reading from page to screen and from the analog to the digital.

Notably, *Pacific Limn*'s trailer does not allow readers to go to the next page unless they finish watching the video. Readers can either wait for the video to end or quit reading. That is, YHCHI's screens generate a textual lacuna distinguished from the book pages developed by Fujihata and Xu Bing in terms of audience empowerment. The lacuna found in YHCHI's screens with kinesthetic texts does not easily guarantee a rosy picture of euphoric unity without conflict or usher in a democratic space of global intimacy. What awaits the viewer-readers instead is a daze, confusion, bewilderment, strangeness, unkindness, and the mixture of all these intense feelings that principally arise from their inability to digest and control the flow of sensory information and the consequent sense of utter powerlessness. Confronting the simultaneous clash of contradictions, such as predictability with arbitrariness and fluency with a sense of incompatibility, the audience becomes disoriented within such an immaterial universe packed with multisensory and kinesthetic signs and signals.

The entire collection of YHCHI's works is sheltered in a computer-generated space, what the group calls Monaco. Monaco is the name of a typeface designed for Macintosh by Susan Kare and Kris Holmes and first released in 1983 as well as that of the Mediterranean country of Monaco. Most of YHCHI's text videos end with the same still screen displaying a two-row credit statement, "YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES / SET IN MONACO," over a paradisiacal photographic landscape of a Mediterranean beach **[Figure 2.13]**. In addition to the overall mood of a vintage postcard, the classic-style cars on the street in this photograph clearly suggest that the image is from an earlier time, perhaps in the Principality of Monaco. However, the designation of "SET IN MONACO" is still dissociated from the existing place since the artists identify the actual location of their residence as Seoul in *RÉSUMÉ I?* commissioned by Rhizom.org in 2007, which functions as a sort of "about the artist" or biography section of a typical artist's website. The disjunction of the title from a specific geographic location in this signature ending statement implies that the foundation of YHCHI's text performance is a computational system and interconnected network unaffiliated with any one particular nation-state. In this sense, YHCHI's Monaco circumvents the traditional geopolitical conception of cultural position and grouping.

Even though YHCHI frequently displays their works as multi-channel video projections within architectural spaces, mainly in the context of exhibitions, art festivals, and site-specific public art projects, the Internet stands as their primary platform of presentation.[192] The group's website, made with modest graphic design, somewhat bluntly provides a list of work titles on the

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[192] When YHCHI's works are presented in conventional exhibitions, they make a totally different spectatorial experience from the computer screens. For a detailed discussion of this, see Soojung Yi, "Site-specific Art Project: Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries," in *Inauguration of MMCA, Seoul*, ed. National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (Seoul: Gungnipyeondaemisulgwan jinheungjaedan, 2014), 324-47. For the site-specificity of YHCHI's projects, see Hyesoo Woo, *Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries Presents Bust Down the Door!* (Seoul: Rodin Gallery, 2004), 18-27.

home page—black Monaco text on a white background often accompanied by options of languages or different versions in blue hyperlinks. Despite the complete list of works chronologically ordered and roughly categorized by commissioned projects, the lack of a label or caption with information, such as the year of production, medium, dimension, duration, and any other credits, constrains the viewer-reader to navigate those hyperlinked pieces by clicking to them one by one, or one language after another. Without a clearly targeted piece to view, surfing the website will be unavoidably time-consuming. As YHCHI adds different versions of existing pieces depending on the exhibition venue and the targeted audience, the options for each piece also continue to increase in number. For example, one of the group's first pieces, *Samsung*, currently offers seven different versions to view from their website—in English, Korean, French, German, Spanish, and Tango. Furthermore, some pieces juxtapose two or more languages on a single screen, such as *Miss DMZ* (English/Korean), *Samsung Means to Come, Beijing Version* (English/Chinese), *Nippon* (Japanese/English), and *Traveling to Utopia: With a Brief History of the Technology* (French/English and English/Korean). Whatever the narratives or messages the artists intended to convey, these works straddle the line between the activation and deprivation of our expectations and abilities to understand and translate the given texts through the sensorial appropriation of languages as color, size, orientation, arrangement, volume, rhythm, tempo, speed, and so on.

In the case of *Miss DMZ* **[Figure 2.14]**, what hampers its viewer-readers from following the storyline comes from the incongruity between the English text that appears in the upper three quarters of the screen and the Korean in the remaining section. While the English section has a larger font size in two to three lines, the Korean section occupies only one row at the bottom. Despite its minor presence in terms of size, scale, and position, the Korean alphabet *hangeul*,

with its characteristic compactness that makes it possible to fit more words in a space than could be written in Roman letters, flows a bit faster and is increasingly asynchronous with the English texts. Especially for the viewer-reader who understands both languages and can translate either way through them, this asynchronous and asymmetrical display of bilingual moving texts instigates an almost chaotic mixture of feelings. In this process, YHCHI's texts become an object not for reading or translating but for sensing.

Traveling to Utopia: With a Brief History of the Technology **[Figures 2.15, 2.16]** intensifies the tendency toward sensorial reading caused by the different nature of each language family. Thanks to the kinship in spelling and grammar between the two Indo-European languages, the French/English version of *Traveling to Utopia* allows for a relatively more comfortable reading experience than the English/Korean one. The kinesthetic tension in the former version results from the variation in font size, the number of rows, and the color combination. The bigger font of French in three rows appears in the black texts over a white background. The smaller English texts set in a single line take acid green text over a black background, reminiscent of the blinking cursor on early computer screens. The opposite directions of these moving texts and their dissimilar motion also contribute to the heightened dynamism and energy on the screen. Whereas the French texts run horizontally from right to left, their English counterpart alters each line with the flicking effect, which again mimics the text typing mechanism with a cursor that appears with a mouse click or disappears with an enter (return) key.

The English/Korean version of *Traveling to Utopia* further complicates the performance with its texts on the trisected screen, on which two English lines and one Korean line emit different stories and characters. The largest text in the middle section shows the same verse as

the French/English version. But each of the Korean text in the first row and the second English text at bottom release different narratives from the main story. As a consequence, the simultaneous display of three dissimilar stories in different letter systems, color combinations, font sizes, and motions simultaneously renders the understanding of the stories and any context an impossible task. What drives viewer-readers to stay, if they choose to do so, despite such disarraying sensations from the illegible groups of texts is perhaps that odd feeling of relief established by the shared sense that we all belong to the never translatable languages of the future. In other words, what binds the viewer-readers together is not the story or subject matter delivered by the texts but feelings (which are often negative, such as "psychological conflict, paranoia, fear and desperation"), sensations, or sensory immersion into the texts stimulating them regardless of their language proficiency or linguistic ability.[193] By frustrating the expectation of the audience to understand what they "read," YHCHI's works produce the post-translational languages of the future. It indeed operates in the opposite way to both Fujihata's and Xu Bing's art of sensorial reading, which kindly instruct and guide the viewer-reader to participate in reading as an essential social act of communication.

6.2. User-Unfriendliness and Disabled Random Access

The founder of Rhizom.org, artist and curator Mark Tribe, considers YHCHI's practice a supreme example of what new media art is and ought to be due to their engagement with the latest media technologies (Flash and the Internet), extended spectatorship that does not count upon institutional contexts, the collaborative nature of production, and global attitudes. He

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[193] Lauren Cornell, "Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Flash-Flood," *ArtAsiaPacific* 58 (May/June 2008): 137.

claims that the relatively simple operating method and "user-friendly" features with "no small, hard-to-read text, no hunting and clicking, no decisions to make, no forms to complete or files to upload" brought out the group's success in the mainstream art scene by appealing to a broader global audience and new media art institutions.[194] But, how could all those nos be so easily embroidered as such an optimistic, constructive, and invincible frame of the "user-friendly"? Is this not a passivity disguised as convenience?

Notwithstanding its seemingly universal, facile, and thus "user-friendly" interface, which provides the audience with a couple of languages or versions to click on to proceed through and play the videos, YHCHI's web art inhabits multiple levels of inherent contradiction and antagonism articulated in very new media art-specific terms, such as immersive spectatorship and interactivity. Acknowledging the paradigm shift in mnemonic technology escalated by the Internet as "an associated technical milieu," Stiegler contends that the dichotomy of producer and consumer will be dismantled and bilaterally recontextualized in the digital circumstance accompanying social transformation.[195] However, thwarting Stiegler's bright vision for the tightened association between producers and consumers by creating Internet-based contents, YHCHI's exclusive adoption of the Monaco font and the seemingly uncomplicated interface of their website does not permit consumers' easy participation in the production of works.

YHCHI's viewer-readers are insecurely nestled in the digital space, which ceaselessly discharges way more information than humans are capable of ingesting all at once. As a result, they are "dissociated" and lose their way, reaching the same kind of a generative lacuna or "cleft" through which to intrude and intervene as exist in the works of Paik, Fujihata, and Xu

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[194] Mark Tribe, "An Ornithology of Net Art," *Tate Online* (2006). https://www.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/entry15274.shtm (accessed December 15, 2021).

[195] Stiegler, "Memory," 83.

Bing. Instead, the audiovisual disposition of texts on screens, which are irregular, rapid, and versatile, sensorially overwhelms them. Here, the use of a single capitalized typeface ironically articulates a trope of the frustrated human desire for the unification formed and controlled at our will even under such a romantic banner of digital globalization. On these accounts, I call such an impeded intervention in the lacuna of the text dictated by YHCHI a sense of "disabled" reading. By "disabled," I mean that the act of reading is no longer dependent solely on the existing systems of written languages and thus necessitates a modification of its agency from letters to senses.

Moreover, YHCHI's Internet-dependent text performance controverts a utopian vision for new modes of communication hinged on the subversive and discursive capacities of digital public space on three points. First, the fact that English serves as a primary and nearly exclusive tool to navigate their website and its contents reaffirms our dependency on this hegemonic language as being far from accidental. Regarding the sovereign status of English in the political stratum of world languages, the artists say,

> To write, read, and chat in English on the Internet is to implicitly justify a certain history. Certain governments don't ban or burn books anymore, they prevent access to the Web, meaning they justify a different history than the one we do by using English. So our choice of language is probably the biggest historical influence on our work.[196]

Second, viewer-readers tend to be disoriented from a storyline due to the extreme outpouring of visual and aural sensations, such as relentlessly beating soundtracks and various special effects for moving words or sentences onscreen often dissected or halted by line or frame. Readability gets challenged despite the minimalistic screen design and linear composition of these moving texts. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, dissimulated as an interactive platform to access

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[196] Swiss, "'Distance, Homelessness, Anonymity, and Insignificance.'"

anytime and anywhere, the actual performance of YHCHI's text animations is what I would call

user-unfriendly and forces a unilateral reading. To borrow their own expression, it "exert[s] a

dictatorial stranglehold on the reader."[197]

The *user-unfriendliness* and the disabled reading in YHCHI's text performances are also

consequences of their inescapable subordination to the nature and shift of the more extensive

computational system on which the group has been dependent for the production and distribution

of their artworks. Before the renovation of the collective's website in 2018 using HyperText

Markup Language (HTML), all the uploaded Flash works did not allow their viewer-readers to

control the viewing/reading practice principally due to the absence of a navigational toolbar on

screens. Similar to the case of the *Pacific Limn* trailer video, once they clicked one of the

hyperlinked titles or versions, the video could not be paused, rewound, or fast-forwarded unless

the viewer-readers forcefully quit and exited from the page. It was impossible to go back to the

exact point where they stopped.

As Jessica Pressman claims, YHCHI intentionally abandoned the enhanced viewership and

interactivity promised by Flash technology and utilized the platform to make their digital

animations look more like "the analogue medium of celluloid film."[198] Although these

unstoppable videos were later updated to work on an embedded video player (linked to Vimeo or

YouTube) with media control keys that granted a certain degree of flexibility, such an obvious

deprivation of audience authority in the previous format is the most critical feature noted by

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[197] Hyun-Joo Yoo, "Intercultural Medium Literature Digital: Interview with YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES," *Dichtung-Digital* (2005), http://www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm (accessed December 15, 2021).

[198] Jessica Pressman, "Pacific Rim Digital Modernism: The Electronic Literature of Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries," in *Pacific Rim Modernisms*, eds. Mary Ann Gillies, Helen Sword, and Steven Yao (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 324.

many critics and scholars of YHCHI. For instance, Pressman interprets the difficulty of reading

their pieces that flash like a "visual onslaught" as characteristic of what she calls "digital

modernism." Not only is the reading process undermined because of the speed of those moving

texts, but the readers also sacrifice control for the writers' drive to "heighten the real-time

performativity of electronic literature" by deactivating access to the programming codes.[199] In a

similar vein, Katherine N. Hayles points out that such mandated replays for comprehending the

contents of each piece give rise to tensions between the desired deep reading that demands

readers' intense attention and the forced hyper reading that requires them to absorb multiple

inputs at once.[200]

Even a restoration of control buttons does not prevent sustaining the *user-unfriendliness*

and the sense of disabled reading. YHCHI runs a separate website suitable for access on mobile

devices that offers a different list of works from the main computer version

(https://www.yhchang.com/A.htm). Even though the videos uploaded to this mobile-friendly site

are also viewable on their YouTube channel, "YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES"

(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJ3WSMvgASfEHCEEvQAKEsg/featured), via the

embedded "Watch on YouTube" feature, no direct access to the content is available. Since the

artists block a search option for the channel and any uploaded videos and turn off the comments

section hindering any open communication, this existence of the streaming station is ghostly. By

fashioning disabled reading through such emphasis on illegibility and intentionally cutting off

audience feedback, YHCHI's practice divulges the hierarchical nature of the digital public space

wherein a computer algorithm governs the experience and tames the attitudes of users.

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[199] Ibid., 318-20. For Pressman's concept of "digital modernism," see Pressman, *Digital Modernism*.

[200] Hayles, *Electronic Literature*, 128.

The transition from the least to the less accessible in the video presentation of YHCHI's art entwines the undeniable fact that any "new" media technologies are destined to be obsolete after all. Adobe's Flash software presented the duo with the newest tool, innovative platform, and artistic possibility to initiate their projects with kinesthetic languages at the end of the twentieth century. They first learned the Flash program while participating in the net art residency program at Multimedia Art Asia Pacific based in Brisbane, Australia, in 1999.[201] For nearly two decades since then, this program served as the primary tool for creating their series of text animations whose formal style did not change much. In July 2017, Adobe announced a plan to discontinue the distribution and update services for Flash Player by December 31, 2020, and block the running of any Flash-based contents beginning January 12, 2021. Upon this announcement, developers, including YHCHI, were recommended to migrate their Flash contents to other media formats. Major tech companies, including Apple, Google, and Microsoft, phased out the Flash player from their web browsers. With the official termination days ahead, all Flash users worldwide received recurring reminders to uninstall the player immediately for the computer system's security before they end its life.[202] Through these steps to the "end of life," Flash became a dead medium that failed to survive and evolve in the ecosystem of the Internet and now only exists in history.

Considering such an uncontrollable shift in the technological environment, one cannot simply assume YHCHI's leaving the Flash program as their altered stance toward the

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[201] Youngna Kim, *1945nyeon ihu hanguk hyeondaemisul* 1945 년 이후 한국 현대미술 [Contemporary Korean Art since 1945] (Seoul: Mijinsa, 2020), 343.

[202] Adobe Communications Team, "Flash & the Future of Interactive Content," July 25, 2017. https://blog.adobe.com/en/publish/2017/07/25/adobe-flash-update.html#gs.5pcanw (accessed December 15, 2021). Also, see the "Flash Player End of Life" Information Page https://www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer/end-of-life.html (accessed December 15, 2021).

interactivity, multi-directionality, or any other "friendlier" gestures toward the audience. Indeed,

the *user-unfriendliness* in the works of YHCHI continued even after their official farewell to

Flash. Due to this (perhaps unwanted) renovation of their artist website, some of the old links to

the group's works still exist in the Internet space in the forms of old blog posts or museums'

digital archives, which are no longer active.[203] With the slow loading time, low-resolution

images, a bunch of "X" boxes, and unworkable hyperlinks that we often encounter in outdated

web materials, such denied access implies that computer screens might have a finite lifespan and

be more vulnerable than printed pages of a book by making their reading "disabled."

The tendency towards *user-unfriendliness* and disabled reading resound the ways in which

Young-Hae Chang describes the purpose of artmaking as "fundamental uselessness." In an

interview with a Korean magazine in 2001, she said, "All art is useless. Useful art is not art, but

propaganda. What I like about web art is the very fundamental uselessness" [my translation].[204]

Here, Chang's stance is precisely opposite to Paik's notion of "random access information" that I

discussed in Chapter One. This idea of random access information compresses Paik's visionary

idea that technological advancement will amplify the audience's intervention into producing a

work of art thanks to its liberation from spatiotemporal constraints.[205] As well as the

deconstruction of the absolute power of the artist/writer/producer, the stress on interactivity and

non-linearity encapsulates the aesthetic of random access information. Paik predicted that works

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[203] For instance, YHCHI's *The Art of Sleep* (2006), which was embedded in the "Intermedia Art: New Media, Sound and Performance" page on the Tate Museum website (https://www.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/the_art_of_sleep.shtm), is deactivated and shows a "Not Found" message. https://www.tate.org.uk/netart/artofsleep/theartofsleep.htm (accessed August 20, 2021).

[204] Jeonggu Kim, "Samseongui tteuseun kwaerageul matboneun geosida–bidio webatiseuteu jangyeonghyessi inteobyu" 삼성의 뜻은 쾌락을 맛보는 것이다–비디오 웹아티스트 장영혜씨 인터뷰 [Samsung Means to Come–Interview with Video Web Artist Young-hae Chang], *Dongnibyeonghwa* (March 2001): 171.

[205] Paik, "Random Access Information."

of art engaging with random access information would flourish in harmony with evolving

communication technologies (satellite and broadband), more affordable personal media devices,

and efficient storage systems with easy retrieval and transmission. He insisted that if electronic

information successfully solves this random access problem, the book, which he regarded "the

oldest form of random access information," would disappear.[206] Undeterred by its innate

indivisibility from the Internet and departure from the traditional format of a book, however, the

distinctive characteristics of YHCHI's practice, especially the minimized users' intervention and

the unilateral structure for delivering contents, position the group's artworks in proximity to what

Paik termed "time based information," which is susceptible to the spatiotemporal condition of

reading and/or viewing as the opposite of random access information. Compliant to the

preprogrammed narrative process, therefore, YHCHI's web art demystifies the democratic

conception of discursivity in the art of the future based on electronic technology that Paik

envisioned through the aesthetic of random access.

In his reading of Fujihata's *Beyond Pages*, Ishida maintains that "Everything is already

pre-written (programmed). A program is an unconscious prosthesis, a predetermined set of grams

(letters)."[207] Likewise, YHCHI's projects disclose the ambivalence of written language systems

as an agency of communication within a predetermined structure of grammatization intrinsic to

the technical milieu of digital media. In *Beyond Pages*, the act of turning a virtual page or the

clicking itself form a practical site for activating our senses and an epiphanic moment to

objectify ourselves. As signaled by the disappeared edges of a page, YHCHI's texts animated

onscreen take us in the opposite direction. Confronted with overpowering amounts of

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[206] Ibid., 48.

[207] Ishida, "This is Not a Book on *Beyond Pages*," 006, 037.

information and sensation unable to be absorbed simultaneously, we are pushed to reflect on how

the digital space pressures us to think, feel, interact with others, and "externalize" ourselves even

if that entails uneasy, uncomfortable sensations beyond comprehension.

7. Conclusion: Beyond the Screen

In this chapter, I investigated three paths of "bookless literature, paperless poem" as examples of

the languages of the future in trans-East Asian circuits of new media art that emerged since

Paik's satellite trilogy. To conclude, I return to Fujihata's idea and practice of "beyond" in

Beyond Pages which he deems an "extremely symbolic action" vital to the ontology of a book.[208]

He acknowledges the impossibility of attaining technical perfection in his media practice or any

other so-called new media art. In his own words, "This work, however, was not supposed to be

technically perfect. Its purpose was to present critically the various problems associated with

technology and so there is meaning in the fact that it is intentionally 'imperfect.'"[209] To Fujihata,

genuinely artistic experiences ought to provide critical models and reflective platforms through

which spectators can re-evaluate reality and understand it more accurately. This understanding is

especially true when our relationships with the contemporary world are placed in the

unconscious realm accelerated by the digitalization of everyday life.[210] Thus, I argue that one

should consider Fujihata's concept of "imperfection" as a possibility in that there is always room

to be filled. The works of Fujihata, Xu Bing, and YHCHI experiment with the various sensory

models of technological grammatization to fill (or un-fill) such "beyond" spaces of

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[208] Masaki Fujihata, "Beyond Pages," in *The Future of the Book of the Future*, ed. Masaki Fujihata (Tokushima: IPA, 1995), 52.

[209] Fujihata, "What is Media Art?" 109.

[210] Ibid., 107.

"imperfection," "clefts," and lacunae. Through diverse gestures of "beyond" the page and toward the screen, their practices raise critical questions of how such a sensorially expanded media condition for recording and encountering any human symbolic activities offers a new angle from which to comprehend digitally repatterned transnational, transcultural, and translingual communication. In the next chapter, I will discuss how such an aspiration of "beyond the screen" has established new languages of the future through human bodies "be(ing) on the screen," themselves serving as a graph and an interface for post-translational communication.

Chapter Three

Embodied Languages: Dumb Type's Performing Bodies as Graphs and Interfaces

1. Dumb "Type" of Performance, or *Pafōmansu*

The year 1984 was also marked by the founding of the Japanese art collective Dumb Type by

then 23-year-old Teiji Furuhashi (1960–95) with his fellow students at Kyoto City University of

Arts, including Toru Yamanaka (b.1960), Toru Koyamada (b.1961), Yukihiro Hozumi (b.1963),

Shiro Takatani (b.1963), Takayuki Fujimoto (b.1960), Hiromasa Tomari (b.1963) and many

others.[211] As the term "dumb" (unwilling or unable to speak) indicates, this group of young

artists from various fields across fine art, architecture, design, music, theater, dance, video, and

programming sought to shape a new theatrical ground that resists the presumptively "smart"

language-based dialogue as the dominant mode of communication on stage. Both traditional and

contemporary forms of Japanese performing arts in the mid-1980s were too dependent on

linguistic elements for these "frustrated" artists.[212] They were eager to transcend the disciplinary

categorization of the arts within established theater practices and plunge into an alternative

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[211] These six artists are often listed as Dumb Type's core members. For example, see Barbara London, "The Growth of Media Art," in *From Postwar to Postmodern: Art in Japan 1945–1989: Primary Documents*, ed. Doryun Chong (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 376.

According to the flyer for *Plan for Sleep #1* (1984), which was "the new Dumb Type's first project," the group members in 1984 included: Teiji Furuhashi, Toru Koyamada, Yuriko Ando, Yukihiro Hozumi, Masako Yasuda, Yurie Hagi, Hiromasa Tomari, Mari Ikubo, Masako Yabuuchi, Tomoko Jindo, Masami Fukuhara, Sakiko Miyamoto, Koji Okamoto, Shiro Takatani, Masato Hanaishi, Naoki Harada, Seiko Ouchi, Misaka Kitamura, and Yoko Matsui. Dumb Type, "Flyer for *Plan for Sleep #1*," 1984, in *From Postwar to Postmodern: Art in Japan 1945–1989*, 373-74.

Since there are two Dumb Type members with the surname Takatani—Shiro Takatani and Yoko Takatani—I use their full names throughout this dissertation.

[212] Bridget Cooper, "Interview with Teiji Furuhashi by Bridget Cooper," *Kyoto Journal* 16, no. 1 (January 1991), reprinted in *Memorandum: Teiji Furuhashi*, 55.

language of performance. Furuhashi proclaims, "We doubted words were the main form of

interpersonal communication, and we wanted to explore deeper levels."[213] Thus, the Dumb Type

artists "have chosen not to verbalize or otherwise comment upon the circumstances that currently

encompass" them. Especially in performance and its extended format of the immersive

installation, the artists' interaction with the spectators, which they deemed "true

communication," is primarily engendered through performers' body motions and gestures rather

than utterances based on pre-written scripts.[214]

In a short essay entitled "DUMB TYPE" (1993), Furuhashi states that there is a voice from

reality that can only be conveyed through being "dumb."

> Poetry can no longer be generated within fantasy.
> It is precisely in reality that the awkward fight to resuscitate the feeble breath of poetry is
> waged.
> I stand in this crossfire and, to the whisker [by a whisker], come to my own particularly
> minute voice. A voice such as only the Dumb can muster. We drag Technology out of this
> junky consumer world to decode these voices.[215]

Here, he stresses the empowering potentiality of technology that can amplify his "minute" voice

and translate a voice being "dumb" into the empathetic languages that enable us to understand

our present circumstances. More crucially, the Dumb Type performers' corporeal movements are

transmitted to the audience as mute but meaningful voices in the course of the technological

decoding of the contemporary world.

As I will address in this chapter, Dumb Type's multiply layered skin surfaces and

silhouettes against projected pictures and videos, flashlight, and pounding sounds on

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[213] Ibid.

[214] Dumb Type, *Voyage* Program Notes, 2002, n.p.
http://www.epidemic.net/en/art/dumbtype/proj/index.html (accessed December 15, 2021).

[215] Teiji Furuhashi, "Dumb Type," in *pHases*, by Dumb Type (Tokyo: Wacoal Art Center, 1993), 4-5.

performance and installation stages construct an affective agency to retrieve "true communication" that leads to post-translational belonging.[216] The most salient feature binding entire Dumb Type performances is that nearly no spoken language is delivered by the performers, except in *S/N* (1992), which devotes several scenes to dialogue. However, the audience still sees some English or Japanese texts appearing on the screen, predominantly quotations from familiar texts related to the theme of each project. For example, excerpts from Michel Foucault's interview, "Friendship as a Way of Life" (1981), intermittently fill the screen of *S/N*, and *Voyage* (2002) displays the entire text of Charles Darwin's *The Voyage of the Beagle* (1839).[217]

Since the performers' somatic presences on stage fill the void of the languages they mundanely listen to and speak, Dumb Type's performances form a "lacuna," which I reconceptualized as a generative site of post-translational interaction and belonging in my discussion of Nam June Paik in Chapter One. In that the Dumb Type artists challenge conventional modes by which words are delivered to the audience, the group's practice also goes along with the ways in which the artists I analyzed in Chapter Two (Masaki Fujihata, Xu Bing, and Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries) recast the act of reading a book as a sensory event. Thus, the works of Dumb Type, which literally "embody" the unspoken language, provide a case study of an essential axis of the trans-East Asian circuits of new media art that produce the most critical languages of the future. This chapter explores the ways in which Dumb Type has constructed a lacuna in their performing and installation works for the potential creation of an

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[216] *Voyage* Program Notes.

[217] For how Dumb Type selects and builds texts for their works, see Keiko Takeda, "Damu taipu niyoru pafōmansu "S/N" (shoen 1994-nen) niokeru in'yō no yote to sakuhin kōzō" ダムタイプによるパフォーマンス『S/N』(初演 1994 年)における引用の様態と作品構造 [The Citations and the Structure of Performance *S/N* (1994) Created by Dumb Type], *Enngekigau ronshu* 58 (2014): 73-89.

embodied language. Before preceding to detailed analysis of selected pieces, it is necessary to

address the specific artistic and historical urgency that led these Kyoto artists to establish *a*

modus operandi distinctive to the Dumb "Type" of performance.

Throughout their 37-year career as a collective, Dumb Type has preferred a horizontal

relationship among members based on a completely collaborative system to hierarchical

leadership. The group also maintains an open membership, so that each piece consists of a

different roster of participants. This is why Dumb Type is still active even after the premature

death of Furuhashi, who is frequently—and mistakenly—regarded as the impresario. In addition

to their proactive embrace of the latest media technologies, the work-in-progress format and

open-ended structure characterize the art of Dumb Type. From their early piece *Pleasure Life*

(1988) to their newest project *2020* (2020), most of the group's works include a multi-media-

based live performance, an installation with computer-controlled devices in a gallery context, a

seminar, a concert, and publications of documentary books, VHS tapes, CDs, and DVDs.[218] For

example, *OR* (1997) was mainly presented as a stage performance for three years in Europe,

Japan, and the U.S. Dumb Type distributed its live recording as a CD, a VHS tape, and a DVD.

They also refabricated this piece as two video installations with sound: the first *OR* installation

(1997/2000) consists of four display panels buried on the gallery floor; for the second occasion,

MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE (2014), the video of Dumb Type members performing *OR* was

combined with two other videos of their later performances, *memorandum* (1999) and *Voyage*.

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[218] In 2019, Dumb Type resumed their collaboration after a decade of dormancy by staging a part of a
new project under the title "WORK IN PROGRESS" on March 24, 2019, at ROHM Theatre in Kyoto.
The completed work was supposed to be unveiled in March 2020 at KYOTO STEAM—International
Arts x Science Festival—which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, Dumb Type
screened their newly titled work *2020* at ROHM Theatre on October 16, 2020, in the form of a filmed
performance without an audience (recorded on March 28, 2020). This recorded performance is also
circulated through the Japan Foundation's YouTube channel.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyDy2tBqjJg (Accessed December 15, 2021).

Finally, the concert version of *OR* (1997), which toured Palermo, Kobe, and Tokyo, featured the music of Yamanaka and Ryoji Ikeda (b.1966) together with Shiro Takatani's video.[219] This artistic style of multi-staged, multi-platformed, and multi-faceted creation distinguishes Dumb Type not only from the experimental art groups of the earlier generation, active in the 1960s–70s, such as the Experimental Workshop [Jikken Kobo], the Gutai Art Association, Mono-ha, Hi Red Center, and the so-called Tokyo Fluxus through the platform of Tokyo's Sogetsu Art Center, but also from other contemporary theater companies in Japan.[220] It is the technologically controlled stage construction that crystalizes the uniqueness of Dumb "Type" of performance in the history of Japanese avant-garde art since the mid-1980s.

Through the minimalist but efficient stage plan for both performance and installation formats—a set of image screens—Dumb Type formulates a spectatorial strategy that intensifies visual, kinesthetic, and acoustic effects. The shape, size, quantity, arrangement, and location of those image screens vary by project. Both *Pleasure Life* and *pH* (1990) utilize a translucent gridded floor as the main screen devised to be viewed from above. In the case of *OR*, three horizontally juxtaposed screens build a semi-circular wall on an empty white floor so that the borderline between the two planes is almost invisible. The performers situate themselves in front of, above, or behind four freestanding screens arranged side by side in *S/N* and *memorandum*. Blended with a delicately designed light scheme, these modular stages visually augment the corporeal presence of the performers whose monochrome costumes frequently merge with the projected images and video collages. At some points of the performance, those physical bodies approximate two-dimensional silhouettes and dark shadows, their spatial edge shared with the

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[219] *DUMB TYPE 1984 2019*, 94-103, 195-96.

[220] Otori Hidenaga, "The Historical Position of Dumb Type in Japanese Theatre: The Birth and the End of the Politics of New Media Dramaturgy," in *The Dumb Type Reader*, 49-60.

surrounding screen images is completely dissolved. Thus, there exists a radically exploded division between the three-dimensional body and the two-dimensional screen.

In addition, reminiscent of the controlled motions of a marionette or a robot, Dumb Type performers generally move in unison. The delicate arrangement of light and sound further stylizes their movements. Strobing flashlights momentarily spotlight and freeze specific motion, leaving its figurative imprints on the screen surface like a written, printed, or typed letter on a paper or a computer screen. At the same time, electronic sound or noise that resemble the camera's shutter sounds, heartbeats, or machinery beeps viscerally penetrate the bodies of both performers and viewers. Such meticulous arrangement of visual, kinesthetic, and aural senses on the performing stage dramatizes the performers' bodies and their stylized movements. In this way, Dumb Type performances endow the human body on stage with an agency in the interaction between artists and audience that cannot be fully conveyed through the existing systems of language.

This signature style of Dumb Type performance had been fashioned under the ever-heightened internationalized milieu of Japanese avant-garde theater practice in the 1980s. One of the group's founding members, Shiro Takatani understands the essence of the performativity of the body within Dumb Type's "stateless or multinational" performances as an attitude that orients toward a sort of universality and is "capable of being shared."[221] In his interview with Megumi Matsuo, who ran a gallery next to Dumb Type's office in Kyoto, Shiro Takatani recollects how frequently the group members have talked about the ways in which international artists, especially from the U.S., such as Robert Wilson (b.1941) or Laurie Anderson, explore

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[221] Kazuhiko Yoshizaki et al., eds., *Aratana keifugaku o motomete: āto shintai pafōmansu* 新たな系譜学をもとめて: アート・身体・パフォーマンス [Seeking New Genealogies: Art / Bodies / Performances] (Tokyo: Firumuātosha, 2014), 126.

new formats of performing art by incorporating the latest technologies into their stages.[222] There

is a direct link here: Takayuki Fujimoto, who has been in charge of lighting design for Dumb

Type's works, participated in Anderson's concert in Kyoto as a member of the backstage staff.

For Fujimoto, "Anderson's experimental work exemplified an entirely new type of performance

we haven't seen before in Japan."[223]

Since the term "performance" itself was not in high usage within the Japanese art scene

back in the early 1980s, knowledge about these American artists' works spurred Dumb Type

members to come up with their own definition of performance, one that defies strict categorical

divisions between music concerts, plays, dance, and theater.[224] The young artists involved with

Dumb Type were desperate to deviate from the conservative conception of performing art,

maintained and even sacralized by old schools of theater and traditional dance, such as *noh*,

kabuki, and *butoh*. In that sense, the practices of Anderson, who had her first tour to Japan in the

early 1980s, offered them one experimental example that embraced technological elements into

the field of art creation and erased disciplinary demarcations.

While Kyoto has been the headquarters for Dumb Type since its formation in 1984, some

of its members regularly attended meetings at Video Gallery SCAN located in Tokyo's Harajuku

area. Opened in 1980 by Japanese video artist Fujiko Nakaya, Video Gallery SCAN played an

epicentral role in linking the circle of Japanese new media artists with internationally renowned

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[222] Megumi Matsuo, "dumb type 25+ kessei 25-nen-me no damu taipu, sono kiseki to genzai. Takatani shirō-shi ronguintabyū." dumb type 25+ 結成 25 年目のダムタイプ、その軌跡と現在。高谷史郎氏ロングインタビュー [The 25th Years of Dumb Type's Foundation, Its Trajectory and the Present. A Long Interview with Takatani Shiro], *AMeeT*, October 6, 2009. https://www.ameet.jp/feature/640/ (accessed December 15, 2021).

[223] Takayuki Fujimoto, interview with the author, Kyoto, Japan, May 10, 2019. Also see Dumb Type, *Voyage*, Program Notes.

[224] Matsuo, ibid.

artists in the field of video art, such as Paik, Bill Viola (b.1951), Gary Hill (b.1951), and Dara

Birnbaum (b.1946), and promoting the works of Japanese video artists to overseas audiences.[225]

Educated in the U.S. and working closely with New York's Experiments in Art and Technology

(E.A.T.) and the Tokyo-based video artist collective Video Hiroba, Nakaya and her Tokyo

gallery provided an intimate society for young Japanese artists. Dumb Type's core members

(Furuhashi and Shiro Takatani) and Fujihata benefited from the dynamic exchange of ideas and

information with fellow artists about the newest media technologies.[226]

Through Video Gallery SCAN, Dumb Type artists gained knowledge about the latest and

most radical new media art—particularly video art—created outside of Japan and hands-on

experience with media devices still hard to access back then due to their high costs.[227] As a

result, Dumb Type's videography bears traces of the influence of both Paik's almost psychedelic

image/sound collages and Viola's musing video universes.[228] For example, with its subtle

arrangement of light and sound, *memorandum*'s video work illustrates how Dumb Type

developed its own attitude to the medium by absorbing the styles of Paik and Viola. Particularly

in this piece, while the combination of fast switching still images and dancers' movements

represents the former, the human bodies slowly floating on a screen surface remind one of the

latter's signature style. This stylistic affinity and adoption expound on one historical condition

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[225] Bill Viola stayed in Japan in 1980 under a Japan-US Artist Exchange Fellowship and made a strong tie with Nakaya and her video art circle in Tokyo. It was Viola who named Nakaya's gallery "Video Gallery SCAN." Alfred Birnbaum, "Japan Video," *Mediamatic Magazine* 3, no. 1 (January 1988). https://www.mediamatic.net/en/page/196980/japan-video (accessed December 15, 2021).

[226] Masaki Fujihata, "Video Gallery SCAN and 1980s Tokyo," in *Resistance of Fog: Fujiko Nakaya*, eds. Junya Yamamine et al. (Tokyo: Tetsuro Uehara, 2019), 374-75.

[227] For Nakaya's activities around Video Gallery SCAN, see *Resistance of Fog*, 332-75.

[228] According to the American writer-translator and Dumb Type collaborator Alfred Birnbaum (b.1955), "The emotive VIOLA School and playful PAIK School dominated early 80's video" in Japan. Birnbaum, "Japan Video."

within which Dumb Type addresses the artistic potential of emerging technology and provides the audience with a highly immersive site of contemplation on the individual and collective subjectivities through their works.

The little-known history of their group name also hints at Dumb Type's shifted stance toward performance as an art form and its potential crossovers into other art genres. Originated in a small theater club, "Karma," at the Kyoto City University of Arts, "Dumb Type Theater" was their first name as an art collective. They soon discarded the "theater" part since they considered their works no longer beholden to the realm of conventional theater. Fujimoto importantly articulates the artistic genre of their work in terms of translation. As he puts it: "The [art] genre identity of Dumb Type's works of art might be best defined as *Pafōmansu* in *katakana* rather than performance in an English word [my translation]."[229] One of three Japanese writing systems, *katakana* is principally used to transcribe foreign languages into Japanese or to write loanwords. In naming their art genre as a *katakana* adaptation of performance, *Pafōmansu* パフォーマンス, Fujimoto encapsulates the ways in which Dumb Type has pursued a unique artistic language that does not belong to any existing genre either at home or abroad.

Dumb Type's well-timed contemplation of the human condition within information-saturated society drew the attention of many Japanese enterprises that seek to reach the global market by modeling a national image of Japan as high-tech and futuristic.[230] Most of the group's early projects, which required a high production cost, benefited from the sponsorship of various public and private sectors that enabled them to navigate the non-verbal sphere of communicating

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[229] Takayuki Fujimoto, interview with the author, Kyoto, Japan, May 10, 2019.

[230] For the relationships between avant-garde art and Japanese enterprises, see Jung-yeon Ma, *Nihon media ātoshi* 日本メディアアート史 [A Critical History of Media Art in Japan] (Tokyo: Artes, 2014), 35-47.

experience on an unprecedented scale and in new forms. In 1990, the Wacoal Arts Center in Tokyo (owned by Wacoal lingerie company) supported the creation of Dumb Type's *pH* and offered a stage for its premiere at the postmodern architectural complex of the Spiral Building, located in the heart of the luxurious Aoyama Street in the capital city. Furuhashi's first solo multi-media installation, *Lovers* (1994), was produced through the technical aid of Canon ARTLAB (1991–2001) as a cultural support project managed by the optical products company Canon Inc.[231] While corporate funding enabled and at least partly dictated Dumb Type's engagement in the coalescence of fine art and technology, the experimental characteristics of the group's works ultimately pushed them to seek much broader spectatorship.

From the early 1990s, patronage from national and international art organizations offered further momentum for Dumb Type's global appearances. In 1993, as the second recipient of Japan's first long-term art support program, Dumb Type won a four-year grant from the Japanese Saison Foundation, which allowed the collective more frequent chances to perform outside the country.[232] Thus, later projects were conceived and developed from the group's month-long artist residencies in France: *OR* at the Théâtre du Manège (Le Manège—Scène Nationale de Maubeuge), Maubeuge, in 1997 and *Voyage* at Centre de Développement Chorégraphique de Toulouse in 2002. The distinctive Dumb "Type" style that prioritizes non-verbal actions and spectatorial immersion over a crystal-clear storyline based on linguistic elements allows the group to attract audiences who do not understand the Japanese language. Compared to earlier works from the late 1980s, such as 036-*Pleasure Life* (1987), *Pleasure Life,* and *pH*, Dumb Type's later pieces hinge even less on linguistic elements. As Furuhashi asserted in 1991, "words

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[231] For the details on Canon ARTLAB's cultural supports for new media arts, see Yukiharu Mizuuchi et al., eds., *Partner of Forerunners–Canon's Cultural Support Activities 1991–2000* (Tokyo: Canon, 2000).

[232] *Voyage* Program Notes.

are never central to the piece."[233] That is, the globally extended spectrum of the audience and the platforms for the presentation of performances act as catalysts for strengthening and even emboldening the group's artistic strategy of "being dumb" to reach further beyond national borders and national languages.

In what follows, I first address how Dumb Type's technology-driven performances and immersive installations concretize the idea of performative bodies as a graph and an interface. Then, I investigate how such embodied languages have evolved in the Japanese new media art scene by attending to the works of Daito Manabe and his Tokyo-based art initiative Rhizomatiks Research. As one of Japan's leading new media artists and a programmer and DJ, he has showcased a broad scope of art projects based on cutting-edge technology. While I trace Manabe's connection to Dumb Type members through their personal relationships and conceptual affinities, my analysis concentrates on his earlier experimentations with a myoelectric sensor device that transmits one's facial expressions to others.[234] In doing so, this chapter ventures into East Asian-specific ways of embodying the post-translational languages of the future by shifting the analytic focus from the human body toward its skin surface, ultimately a face. It also points toward the demonstration of how these Japanese new media artists disrupt, alter, and expand the media through which we perceive ourselves and connect to others under the historical, institutional, and technical transformations of a globalizing Japanese visual culture since 1984.

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[233] Cooper, "Interview with Teiji Furuhashi by Bridget Cooper."

[234] Media art theorist Machiko Kusahara suggests the term "device art" to characterize Japanese new media art where various devices perform a crucial task in shattering the hierarchy between fine and applied arts and high and low arts. Machiko Kusahara, "Device Art: A New Approach in Understanding Japanese Contemporary Media art," in *MediaArtHistories*, ed. Oliver Grau (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007), 277-307.

2. Typing with That Dumb Body

A premeditated metaphor of xerographic systems in Dumb Type's *pH* **[Figures 3.1, 3.2]**, which

depicts the human body as an object placed inside a gigantic copy machine or a scanner,

provoked the central inquiries of this chapter: how does the performers' bodily presence

substitute the role of a graphical sign system as a primary conduit of interhuman

communication? May we then consider these bodies as a post-translational language only the

"Dumb" can "Type"?

In *pH*, the bodies of three women (Noriko Sunayama, Mayumi Tanaka, and Misako

Yabuuchi) and two men (Peter Golightly and Teiji Furuhashi) are consigned to the control of a

pair of metal bars—one measuring 7 feet and the other 2 feet from the floor—automatically

running across a long and narrow stage.[235] Perched on seats above the two wings of the stage, the

audience is invited to "decode" these performers' bodily struggles in confronting those

unceasingly approaching trusses throughout the whole thirteen "pHases." The mechanical

operation of those massive trusses, whose bottom surfaces are embedded with a sound operator,

light system, and slide projectors, transforms the entire performance space into a huge replica of

a photocopying machine or a flat-bed scanner, as Dumb Type members and critics have typically

described the piece.[236] The meticulous set design positions spectators to have a birds-eye

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[235] Since its debut in Japan, *pH* has been staged at major art venues throughout the world, including Artspace Momonkan (Kyoto, Japan), Kyoto Municipal Museum of the Art (Kyoto, Japan), Institute Contemporary Arts (Nagoya, Japan), Estadio de la Juventud (Granada, Spain), Art in the Anchorage 8 (New York, USA), Noda Hall (Osaka, Japan), Chapter Arts Centre (Cardiff, Wales), Tramway (Glasgow, Scotland), Messepalast–"Wiener Fest Wochen" (Vienna, Austria), Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid, Spain), Theater im Pumpenhaus (Münster, Germany), and Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney, Australia). Dumb Type, *pHases* (Tokyo: Wacoal Art Center, 1993), 70.

[236] Yukiko Shikata, "White-out: Dumb Type's Image Machine," *ArtAsiaPacific* 27 (2000): 42; Woodrow Hood and Cynthia Gendrich, "Noise and Nudity: Kyoto's Dumb Type," *Theatre Forum* 18 (Winter 2000): 5; Peter Eckersall and Edward Scheer, "Punch Cards, *Pleasure Life* and *pH*, Interview with Fujimoto Takayuki, Kyoto, 15 December, 2013," in *The Dumb Type Reader*, 251; Barbara London, "Teiji Furuhashi, Trailblazer," in *DUMB TYPE 1984 2019*, 146.

perspective, which provides them with a fuller view of the movements of the trusses and the projected images on the floor. Seen from above, the audience soon realizes that the data-object being scanned, copied, converted, and recorded by this machine-stage is the performers' physical presence and its traces hauntingly left on the stage. Situated under the sweeping metal bars that emulate the exposure lamp of a copier, the performers' bodies take the place of any textual or graphical information intended for reading and interpretation.

Dumb Type artists continued to employ the xerographic system metaphor, which re-envisions the human body as an object of reading, as their crucial artistic strategy. For instance, in *OR* **[Figure 3.3]**, an animated image of light played on the background screen supplants the metallic bars in *pH* with an intense stroboscopic effect. For the entire duration of this performance, a single vertical line of bright light traverses the curved screen wall. This screen features other layers of visual information and is imbricated with the performers' bodies on the front stage. Mimicking the mechanical movement of an exposure lamp, this vertical light "reads" the bodies "written," "printed," or "typed" on the screen surface. As such, Dumb Type's theatrical environment with a technologically-controlled audiovisual system orchestrates the choreographic motions and gestures of the performers, which fill the void of languages. Thus, in order to highlight the pivotal role of moving bodies in "reading" Dumb Type's practice, I suggest reconfiguring the human body as a graph that exercises the agency of enframing information and functions as a communicative language of the future.

2.1. Body-Graphs

In understanding the art of Dumb Type as forming a gestural *body-graph* beyond language, I build on but also depart from current scholarship on the group. The majority of previous

academic accounts of Dumb Type's works interpret the performers' synchronized and robot-like

movements as critical remarks on the sense of disorientation within the information-saturated

postmodern condition or as indicators of a Japanese-specific gender sensibility. While some

scholars read Dumb Type's choreography as apathetic reactions to consumerist routines in an

alienated urban state of living, others connect the dramatic stage design with the voyeuristic

position of the audience and the searchlight to the subjugation of the human to machines and

technology.[237] In her feminist analysis of *pH*, performance studies scholar Katherine Mezur

claims that the female group of performers challenge socially demanded gender roles and

dismantle sexual division through their "phantom" beings who obtain provisional power to win

against the authoritative machinery in Dumb Type's performing space.[238] Moreover, Furuhashi's

diagnosis as HIV-positive in the early 1990s and the pivotal influence of his experience living

with the virus on the subsequent project *S/N* resulted in vibrant discussions of how Dumb Type

performances brought the taboo topics of sex and gender into the major art scene in Japan by

problematizing the heteronormative standards of Japanese society.[239] While Keiko Takeda draws

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[237] Monroe, *Japanese Art after 1945*, 343; Dorinda Neave, "Meditations on Space and Time: The Performance Art of Japan's Dumb Type," *Art Journal* 60, no. 1 (2001): 86-90; Gunhild Borggreen, "Dumb Type Technology: Man and Machine in Japanese Art and Society," in *The Dumb Type Reader*, 82-87.

[238] Katherine Mezur, "Fleeting Moments: The Vanishing Acts of Phantom Women in the Performances of Dumb Type," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 12, no. 1 (2001): 191-97.

Mezur also analyzes the transgender performances of Noriko [Norico] Sunayama—the female choreographer and performer of Dumb Type—through the local-specific lens of "girl culture" operating in the global context. Katherine Mezur, "Sex with Nation: The OK (Bad) Girls Cabaret," in *Bad Girls of Japan*, eds. Laura Miller and Jan Bardsley (Houndmills, Balsingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 175-89.

[239] Furuhashi did "come out" and confessed his HIV-positive status in a letter sent to his fellows on October 11, 1992. Teiji Furuhashi, "Furuhashi Teiji no atarashii jinsei—LIFE WITH VIRUS: HIV kansen happyō iwaitte" 古橋悌二の新しい人生—LIFE WITH VIRUS: HIV 感染発表祝って [Teiji Furuhashi's New Life—LIFE WITH VIRUS: Celebrating the Announcement of HIV Infection], in *Memorandum: Teiji Furuhashi*, 36-43.

together the Foucauldian notion of subjection and Furuhashi's practice of "coming out" in *S/N*, Wim Lunsing provides a historical overview of how the production of this openly controversial piece made its participants more cohesive than ever.[240]

In these wide-ranging sociopolitical readings, Dumb Type's employment of diverse cutting-edge technologies, both conceptually and materially, converges on the subject matter or content of the works—particularly issues of dehumanization under the radical technological transformation of Japanese society. However, I depart from such a predominately dystopian stance revolving around the man-machine dichotomy. Instead, I concentrate on the sensory impact of audiovisual devices and digital technology upon the human body with regard to its formal and functional aspect as a conveyor of meanings and a catalyst of collective feeling. This critical move alters our approach to answer the crucial question Dumb Type has investigated so coherently for over the three-and-a-half decades: how does technological advancement enable us to reimagine our shared future as well as our present state as social beings? In responding to this question, I propose reading a human body as a sort of a graph. Through what I term the *body-graph*, I claim Dumb Type's *oeuvre* as a compelling artistic model that creates the sensory and aesthetic conditions of a technologically-reconstructed intimacy not dependent on conventional systems of language.

For more on Furuhashi's involvement in queer activism and subculture scene in the Kansai area through his regular drag show "The Diamond Nights," see Barbara London, "Teiji Furuhashi: Diamonds Are Forever," *ArtAsiaPacific* 51 (Winter 2006): 92-97; Haruhiro Ishitani et al., eds., *MAM Research 006: Chronicle Kyoto 1990s–Diamonds Are Forever, Art-Scape, And I Dance with Somebody* (Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2019).

[240] Keiko Takeda, "Teiji Furuhashi: On 'Coming Out' in *S/N* (1994)," in *The Dumb Type Reader*, 109-19; Wim Lunsing, "The Creation of *S/N* and the Debate about Sexuality in 1990s Japan," in *The Dumb Type Reader*, 97-107.

A graph has two lexical meanings: a visual representation of sound or speech constituents, and a diagram displaying the relation between two variables or more. I take the latter definition for my conceptualization of a *body-graph*, since the agential role of the performers' bodies entails certain patterns for relating and being in relation, such as the relations between human bodies and between animate and inanimate bodies. Moreover, the spectatorial encounter with such a *body-graph* in Dumb Type's live performances and interactive installations offers material and sensorial evidence for analysis of how new media technology renews our conception of bodily resonance as an alternative to the hegemony of verbal communication and fixed ideas secured in a linguistic form.

The constantly changing appearance of a moving body and its material presence on the sensorially charged stages of Dumb Type's artworks ensure that the existing language system is no longer considered a primary mode of interhuman communication or just insufficient for such a task. By pointing out the difficulty of articulating the intricate relationship between linguistic and cultural practices, media theorist Mark B. N. Hansen develops his theory of technological embodiment as the kernel of new media aesthetics. Drawing from postmodern philosophies, visual culture studies, cognitive science, and media theory, his influential publication series on new media and digital art confers the human body with the most vital and singular agency that enfolds and processes digital information whose scope and speed of transmission accelerates human capability and inflects every facet of contemporary human experience.[241]

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[241] Mark B. N. Hansen, *Embodying Technesis: Technology Beyond Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Mark B. N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004); Mark B. N. Hansen, *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media* (New York; London: Routledge, 2006); Mark B. N. Hansen, *Feed-Forward: On the Future of Twenty-First-Century Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

What I find especially pertinent to my study of the bodies on Dumb Type stages as vehicles of global communication is Hansen's notions of affectivity and the embodiment of the digital image. First, the term "affectivity," in his sense, designates the sensorimotor power of the body that renders its experience "more than itself" and produces "the unpredictable, the experimental, the new."[242] Second, what he dubs the "digital image" endorses the decisive role of embodied experience in processing information into a perceivable image that solicits affective reactions from receivers. These two ideas advocate the discursive power of the human body and the empathetic sensation generated by its interactive gestures, which eventually remain the most crucial communicative agency, replacing conventional systems of verbal and literal language.

By updating Henri Bergson's consideration of the living body as "a center of indetermination" and as a subject who merely "selects" preexisting images, Hansen underscores the empowered status of the body in the digital condition that "filters" information and "enframes" digital images. From his standpoint, one shared mission of all new media artworks is "placing the embodied viewer-participant into a circuit with information" through which information is transformed into "corporeally apprehensible images." Therefore, the only indicator that we can still be human in the current era of digital convergence is the embodiment of the affectivity that ingests overwhelming sensorimotor data transmitted through media technology.[243] As Katherine N. Hayles notes, one critical contribution of Hansen's discussion of the digital reperception of human experience and sensibility is the keen attention it pays to the physiological ground of the embodiment that cannot be logically explained with existing

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[242] Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*, 7.

[243] Ibid., 10-12.

languages.[244] In particular, how a human body takes an agential role in "filtering" and

"enframing" information into "corporeally recognizable digital images" corresponds to the ways

in which I conceptualize the "typing" actions of the Dumb Type performers as a *body-graph*.

Concerning Hansen's insight into the human body and its incompatibility with

conventional language systems in the digitally recontextualized communication environment,

Hidetaka Ishida's understanding of media as "a matter of a graph" provides another useful

conceptual lens. According to Ishida's definition, a graph designates all kinds of human

activities, recording acts of communication and self-representation.[245] As the suffixal function of

"graph" in media technological terms like a photograph, phonograph, or cinematograph

epitomizes, it refers to the very objects being written—light, sound, or movement.[246] When we

are reminded of the photocopying machine or scanner metaphor in Dumb Type's *pH* and *OR*,

what is being written is the performers' bodies transmitted to the audience through a mixture of

media technologies. This analogy results in an equation of the performers' bodies to a graph,

facilitating the audience's "reading" of the works. That is, the practice of reading in Dumb Type

performance primarily arises from the audience's physical and affective absorption into the

technologically mediated site of the event. It is not rooted in their pre-existing knowledge or

other kinds of symbolic systems, such as languages or practices of language translation.

In a series of non-narrative performing events in *pH*, the performers' bodies serve as a non-

verbal medium by which viewers can get various tacit information. For instance, pHase 6 begins

by featuring three female performers clad in white slip dresses who lie parallel to one another on

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[244] Katherine N. Hayles, *How We Become Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 4.

[245] Ishida, *Dijiteol midieoui ihae*, 80.

[246] Hidetaka Ishida, "Body and Letters in the Age of New Media: How Can We Reformulate the Semiotic Project in the Context of East Asia?" *Gihohagyeongu* 35 (2013): 34-49.

the floor with three pinpoint lights falling on their faces. While the projected images and lights of the trusses endlessly pass over the stage, the performers vary their synchronized postures by stretching and folding their arms and legs or twisting and bending their sides. Each pose halts for a few seconds before moving onto the next one. Viewed from above—the intended position of the audience—these momentarily freezing motions draw a letter-like shape on a paper-screen though one that belongs to no specific alphabet.

These body postures foster further patternization in pHase 8, in which the performers repeat a series of tedious actions: obliquely sitting on a folding chair, standing up and kneeling on the floor, sitting again, turning around the chair, putting their hands behind their heads, lying upside down while resting their knees on the back of the chair, stretching out their hands, standing up again, jumping over the lower bar in order to run away from the upper one to the end of the stage, and walking back to the chair. Suffused in an intense flashing light and a beating sound, these actions appear mechanically stiff and disconnected from each other. By witnessing such repetitive motions in the subsequent pHases, the audience is prompted to uncover the interrelations of the performers' physical movements and the surrounding conditions, such as the moving trusses, the chairs on the floor, and the texts, images, and videos projected on the back screen and the floor. Or, more critically, this work presses the audience to challenge any language-based meaning of these actions.

In short, through the tactics of being "dumb," Dumb Type's performances recast the communicative status of the body when it is no longer a clear sign within a legible system. The performers' *body-graphs* operate as a signifier that stimulates the spectator-specific interpretation, not as a signified that carries pre-defined ideas and emotions. On this account, I suggest rereading the second part of their group name "type" in the verb form, "to type." By

using "to type" and all the metaphors of writing, printing, and imprinting in *pH*, I do not defend the irreplaceability of letter-based language systems in interhuman communication. Instead, I accentuate the vital role of the human body for communication in the art of Dumb Type. The verb form of "type" also reinforces the performative ways in which their works impel spectators to find the subversive potential of the human body as that which is not just typed but also types. To understand "type" as an action further gestures toward working against or even undoing "type" as in typology. It thus resists the fixed meanings attributed to the shapes and appearances of bodies.

2.2. Typing Memories

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Ishida argues that we should employ the idea of media literacy as a critical term to deal with various issues stemming from the digitalized human engagement with media. And, we should equip ourselves with technology in order to carry out the critique of media.[247] Dumb Type artists brought new media technology into the critique of media or media literacy with their investigation of the human body as the very object of literacy in their performances, as *pH* exemplifies. How then has the digital shift in contemporary art-making, where a computer and its algorithms predominantly process images and intrude upon the spectatorial experience, affected the mechanism of reading a *body-graph*? The ways in which the Dumb Type performers' bodies play a principal role in relating to the audience in *memorandum* **[Figure 3.4]** provides one answer to this question.

Premiered at Le Manège—Scène Nationale de Maubeuge, France, in October 1999, *memorandum* unfolds Dumb Type's spectacular scenario about how human experience is shaped

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[247] Ishida, *Dijiteol midieoui ihae*, 238.

as memories and how we reconceive the idea of memory and its representation with the fast-shifting streams of digital media technologies. The eight performers (Seiko Ouchi, Takao Kawaguchi, Hidekazu Maeda, Noriko Sunayama, Mayumi Tanaka, Misako Yabuuchi, Manna Fujiwara, and So Ozaki) move both in front of and behind a wide translucent screen that stands vertically in a space fully surrounded by black-colored walls and floor. The versatile operation of video cameras easily incorporates the performers' movements in multiple locations—both onstage and backstage—with the pre-recorded still and moving images projected onto the screen. Depending on the intensity of the stage light and colors of the screen imagery, the performers' identities repeat showing and un-showing. Against the illuminating backscreen, their moving bodies often turn to a dark shadow. When they stand closer to the screen, their shadows appear in sharper silhouettes, which are otherwise blurry. As a result, the performers garner a sort of anonymity through the shadow and momentary blurriness. The highly abstracted imagery of their moving bodies remaining as shadows and silhouettes constructs a sort of figurative system that does not belong to any specific alphabets. Such subtle interplay of the choreography and the screen composition with lighting characterizes how a *body-graph* is "typed" and operates as one language of the future in this piece. That is to say, all the multisensory reconstruction of the performer's bodies on stage provides the most decisive clue for the audience to follow the flow of the story in *memorandum*. By simultaneously catching viewers' eyes and viscerally infiltrating their bodies, Dumb Type's *body-graphs* further call upon their participation in building that story together.

Engulfed by a deluge of images, sounds, lights, and motions, *memorandum* drives the audience to infer the meanings conveyed in the performers' *body-graphs*. Regarding spectators' embodied experience in *memorandum*, theater and performance theorist Peter Eckersall contends

that the material and physical condition of this piece is "*felt in the body*" through specific neurological stimuli.[248] His emphasis on the ways in which the multi-media stage construction stimulates the spectators' bodily sensations in appreciating the work resonates with my conceptualization of a performer's body as a graph. In Dumb Type's performances, a *body-graph* does not work in a merely symbolic way. It is more closely bound with the expressive realm of languages that cannot be verbalized but are felt—or that "only the Dumb can muster." In this light, I argue that such a non-linguistic operation of a *body-graph* endows corporeality with an intermediary role connecting the performers with the audience.

The almost disorienting image collages projected onto the screen in *memorandum* hint at how we construct, preserve, and share memories as contemporary beings living in the overwhelming flux of information through media technologies. It also manifests how such technological processing of memorization reconditions the ways in which human beings live together. In this piece, such a disorienting state of oneself is predominantly rendered through the performers' actions toward or against a cascade of fragmented texts or indiscernible memos scribbled on a writing pad, both of which are projected on a screen and superimposed on their bodies. As explained earlier, Dumb Type frequently uses screen projection of written text as their prop. This method of displaying texts somewhat oddly but effectively buttresses the tactic of being "dumb" since it again informs the invalidity of any existing language systems in addressing "true communication."

In *memorandum*, words and truncated sentences from children's stories surface onto the screen in the first two sequences. The first scene shows a page excerpt from *Goldilocks and the*

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[248] Peter Eckersall, "Whiteout Dumb Type: Postmodernism and the Birth of New Media Dramaturgy," in *The Dumb Type Reader*, 165-66.

Three Bears, which is inscribed on a glass-like screen **[Figure 3.5]**. As most parts of the page are erased, what remains on the screen is a seemingly irrelevant set of words ("it's a simple story," "three," "hungry," "inside," "soup," "only very little," "least," "then," "minutes," "unmade," "so," "?" "back," "they," "her," "how," and "after"), as if they are floating in zero-gravity space. The screen then projects the whole bodies of the performers who crawl on the backstage floor one by one through a real-time camera shot from the air. The overlapped layers of texts and bodies make the illusion that the performers are climbing up a stair consisting of those broken words. As the scene continues, the erased texts gradually clear the surface to a child's loud recital of the page whose English text is changed to Japanese.

In the following sequence, one of the male performers, Takao Kawaguchi, sits on a bar stool and starts to scribble on a notepad in total silence **[Figure 3.6]**. Soon the screen behind him shows his notepads on which he summarizes the contents of *Jack and the Beanstalk*—some lines in English and others in Japanese. Here, what draws the audience's attention instead of the written texts is Kawaguchi's hand, which moves faster and faster to write, the sound his pen makes on a crisp sheet of paper, and the sensory atmosphere created from all these actions. The written texts he is so passionate about do not exist to be read by the audience. Rather, it is an artistic scheme to show how deeply engrossed he is in the act of memorization and how unstable and fugitive the memories generated in written forms are.

Shiro Takatani explains Dumb Type's theatrical strategy of presenting texts via a closed-circuit video and its live projection onto the backdrop screen:

> Whereas spoken languages are transmitted through the human body, the letters are transmitted through something other than the human body. In that sense, the letter looks much flatter, by which I do not mean it is meaningless, but works in much more nuanced

ways. We wanted to express the way the letter is read in itself (not through human intervention such as speech and dialogue) [my translation].[249]

As such, Dumb Type artists seek to place text on equal ground with other performance components, such as still and moving images, choreography, light, sound, and set design. "There is no hierarchy, but the whole one."[250]

By describing how these texts—mainly in English and occasionally in Japanese—invoke "alien, foreign, or different" feelings in both English- and Japanese-speaking audiences, Woodrow Hood and Cynthia Gendrich also assert that written forms of languages are detached from the act of speech in the group's practice.[251] The linguistic elements are purely regarded as one of many properties constructing the whole event and consequently lose their supremacy in transmitting information and leading the narrative. Instead, sensorially decoded texts pack the stage together with other performative components and force the audience to see the performer's body, which no longer exists as the conveyer of language but in itself. In so doing, new media technology stimulates the audience to be unimpeded by a reliance on the spoken and written languages in Dumb Type's performances.

To borrow Japanese art critic Yukiko Shikata's expression, "The performer was imprinted on the space as a continuous chain of still pictures appearing in flashing light."[252] Although a *body-graph* for being "imprinted" is barely defined and retained as a concrete form or system due to its continually altering nature, it undertakes the decisive role of guiding the audience into

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[249] Shiro Takatani, interview with the author, Kyoto, Japan, May 11, 2019.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Hood and Gendrich, "Noise and Nudity," 6.

[252] Shikata, "White-out," 42.

the stories "untold" but "typed" by the human body. In other words, the human body

reconfigured as a graph seizes the hegemonic status of language in interhuman communication.

Art historian Jane Blocker describes *memorandum* as a memory machine that undoes the

logic of witnessing and self-conception.[253] Her in-depth reading of *memorandum*'s sequences

posits an ontological inquiry into the destabilized status of subjectivity under the disintegrating

and overpowering operation of media technologies for witnessing, remembering, and forgetting.

As Blocker convincingly articulates, people are compelled to produce and consume memories of

sharing or histories under the new media-oriented communicative condition, which is scalable

but uncontrollable. And I take her attention to the crisis of the self in such a condition as the

potential redrafting of existing modes of human interaction through my concept of a *body-graph*.

That is, thinking through a *body-graph* enables us to see how Dumb Type's experiments

cultivate an entirely new direction in which to define and historicize collectivities through the

memories rewritten by technologically mediated bodily movements and sensations. The

subsequent section discusses how post-translational collectivities and relations are formed on

bodily surfaces by examining Furuhashi's solo piece (*Lovers*) and Dumb Type's two installations

(*OR* and *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE*) based on my second analytic term, a *skin-interface*.

3. Relations on Skin-Interfaces

3.1. Skin-Interfaces

According to post-colonial and feminist theorist Sara Ahmed, one's bodily alignment with and

against others provokes collective feelings or materializes borders, mediated through and

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[253] Jane Blocker, *Seeing Witness: Visuality and the Ethics of Testimony* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 61-84.

impressed on the skin surface.[254] She calls the skin surface "the contact zone of impression," where feelings for others emerge.[255] Elsewhere, with Jackie Stacey, Ahmed urges attention to the discursive dimension of skin as "the fleshy interface between bodies and worlds" beyond the mere extension of the body: "If the skin is always open to being read (and being read differently), we can also consider the ways in which these various techniques for reading produce skins in specific and determinate ways."[256] The ontological questioning of the changed condition of the human being under digitalization raised through the various boundaries in Dumb Type's works is most dramatically explored on the performers' skin surfaces which emerge as a generative and affective site of contact. In this aspect, it is worth noting that Shikata rightly depicts *pH* as a piece in which every element becomes "thin and insubstantial" and converges on "surfaces." On those surfaces where media technology sensorially arrests the corporeal presence of the human, "The performers function as mapping modules of the image machine and are permeated by its effect."[257] By aligning themselves to the performers' "permeable" bodies etched on the stage and the screen, therefore, Dumb Type's audience discovers an entrance into their shared universe. For my analysis of Dumb Type's performative installations that offer such a crucial site, or a "lacuna," of community building, I propose my coinage, *skin-interface*, to designate such practical potential of "mirroring" and "paralleling" that principally engenders relations on the bodily surface.

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[254] Sara Ahmed, "Collective Feelings; or, The Impressions Left by Others," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 21 (2004): 25-42.

[255] Ibid., 30.

[256] Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, eds., *Thinking Through the Skin* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1.

[257] Shikata, "White-out," 42.

By the term "interface" hyphened with "skin," I underscore the more profound and denser level of interaction felt in and promoted by a body with the world through technological intermediation in its affective operation. In *The Interface Effect* (2012), Alexander R. Galloway endeavors to revise and expand the idea of an interface beyond material and/or technological artifice (screens, windows, and thresholds) that either induces or impedes one's connection with others. As articulated through his dictum for an interface, which is "always an effect" and "always a process or a translation" rather than a stable entity, one should grasp it as a discursive force that reflects and affects the social, historical, and cultural context of a given society.[258] Grounded in both Ahmed's and Galloway's discussions of skin and interface, I define a *skin-interface* as a corporeal domain charged with an aesthetic and a political potency where any transformations of social relationships can be imagined and promised. As the language of the future, the bodies standing on technologically reshaped boundaries serve as an alternative communicative mode of non-verbal attachment to others.

The idea of the boundary is inextricably linked with how the performing bodies on Dumb Type's technologically expanded stages activate viewers' awareness of their individual and collective subjectivities. Building on the boundaries between acidity and alkalinity (*pH*), between signals and noise (*S/N*), between life and death (*OR*), between memory and amnesia (*memorandum*), and between dislocation and settlement (*Voyage*), manifold bilateral perceptions of the world pierce the entire Dumb Type practice aesthetically and conceptually. As curator Yuko Hasegawa cogently explains, the ways in which these works connect the human body to technologies particularly appeal to contemporary viewers, "who live between the two realities of

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[258] Galloway, *The Interface Effect*, 33.

the physical and the virtual. Or for the bodies that exist at that border."[259] To describe the

ambiguity of the acts of measuring and demarcating borderlines, Furuhashi once cited his

witnessing of his mother's death in a sickroom. What led the artist to his sense of the border

between life and death was the stopped pulmotor sound and the graph on a monitor of a

diagnostic machine—namely, technology.

> My mother died last month of cancer. When her heart suddenly stopped, you could see that
> from the life-support machine. It was there in the room. I was screaming to the doctors to
> come and they started, 'Boom, boom.' Beat. Attack to the heart. And air was in her mouth.
> Observing the beat from inside her body. When they beat her heart, the life-support
> machine described, 'Btt. Btt.' It looked like she wasn't dead yet. But when they stopped, it
> went. 'Buuuuh.' Horizontal line. I couldn't distinguish what was the border between life
> and death. I had to rely on the technology to know she died. …[260]

In Furuhashi's anecdote, the visual and auditory signals of the life-support machine substituted

for utterances and letters. The machine's agency is that of describing the states of bodies on the

borders through sound, which are not exactly words ("Boom, boom," "Btt. Btt.," and "Buuuuh"),

"the beat from inside her body," and the "Horizontal line." Analogous to the meaning and

operation of a *body-graph* that diagrams relations between bodies, this machine technology

describes relations between states of bodies at the borders of life and death, not through words.

Therefore, this was a genuinely epiphanic moment for Furuhashi to be aware that the human

body exists between opposing standards and principles on a surface that cannot be clearly

conceived or sensed without technological involvement. Such ambivalence and liminality are

dissolved into his individual work, *Lovers*, and the group works of Dumb Type. In these

installations, the intangible flesh of the Dumb Type performers, including Furuhashi himself,

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[259] Yuko Hasegawa, "Seeking New Genealogies—Bodies/ Leaps/ Traces," in *Aratana keifugaku o motomete*, 193.

[260] Laura Trippi, "Dumb Type/Smart Noise," *World Art* 2 (February 1996): 33.

offers the audience an experience on the borders between the physical and the virtual, the real and the imagined worlds, me and you.

Michel Foucault calls the human body "the principal actor in all utopia" in his short essay, "Utopian Body," initially delivered in a radio lecture in 1966.[261] To him, the human body symbolizes a zero point where the journey to explore oneself and navigate its coordinates in the world begins.

> It [the body] is at the heart of the world, this small utopian kernel from which I dream, I speak, I proceed, I imagine, I perceive things in their place, and I negate them also by the infinite power of the utopias I imagine. My body is like the City of the Sun. It has no place, but it is from it that all possible places, real or utopian, emerge and radiate.[262]

Foucault's insight posits the potential of the human body as a singular and vital medium capable of perceiving one's position within the world. He deems confrontation with one's own body image via mirrors a crucial moment that "assign[s] a space to the profoundly and originally utopian experience of the body."[263] It is noteworthy that Shiro Takatani also talks about the relationship between the performing body and technologies in Dumb Type's art. According to the artist, technology in the group's works takes part in a sort of Lacanian mirror stage, in which one's self-perception primarily works through (body) images on a mirror and thus designates a world before language.[264]

In the technologically-intensified mirror stage of Dumb Type's works, the spectators identify their experience with those of the actors on stage. Shiro Takatani states,

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[261] Michel Foucault, "Utopian Body," 1966, reprinted in *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, ed. Caroline A. Jones (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 231.

[262] Ibid., 233.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," 1949, reprinted in *Écrits*, by Jacques Lacan, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 75-81.

> And it wouldn't work if there were no actual bodies on stage. The bodies on stage support this whole system. Without them, this circuit of experience between the audience and the performer wouldn't work and there would be no identification process and nothing to be amplified by the technology.[265]

As Foucault's and Shiro Takatani's focus on the mirroring effect of a human body suggests, new media art space's fluidity and flexibility reconfigure such corporeal operation as a multisensorial site of self-conception and, more significantly, of contemporary collectivity.

3.2. Mirrored and Paralleled Self

Dumb Type often recontextualized their live performances as permanent installations that encapsulate the affective mechanism of screen projection. Three such pieces I scrutinize in this section address how a *skin-interface* serves as the bodily language of the future through which the human skin surface, as a two-dimensional image of moving bodies, is attached to that of the person who is viewing.

A year before he passed away in 1995 due to AIDS, Furuhashi created *Lovers*, also known as *Dying Pictures, Loving Pictures* **[Figure 3.7]**. This work is now in the permanent collection of MoMA, and the museum credits Furuhashi as its sole creator. However, his Dumb Type colleagues contributed to the production of this work as performers and technicians. After Furuhashi's death, Shiro Takatani directed the preservation of *Lovers* and provided the technical requirement list for the revised editions by updating an operating computer, video projection equipment, playback equipment, control systems, and audio equipment.[266] In addition to the

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[265] Peter Eckersall, Edward Scheer, and Fujii Shintrao, "'I don't See a Difference Between Machine-time and Human-time,' Interview with Takatani Shiro, Kyoto, 15 December, 2013," in *The Dumb Type Reader*, 242.

[266] *Lovers* was reconstructed both in the U.S. and in Japan two decades after its initial installation at the Canon ARTLAB in 1994, followed by the 1995 MoMA exhibition, "Video Spaces: Eight Installations." For conservation records and information about the revised versions, see Kyoto City University of Art Archival Research Center, "taimube-suto medhia o mochiita bijutsu sakuhin no shūfuku/ hozon ni

thematic association with Dumb Type's 1994 performance *S/N*, which Furuhashi conceived

based on his personal experience as a gay and HIV-positive person, *Lovers* possesses the formal

characteristic of the group's installations that foregrounds the interactive function of the

performers' bodies.[267] Because of this, I begin my analysis of a *skin-interface* in Dumb Type's

art with *Lovers*.

Lovers unfurls an intimate and immersive panorama encircled with life-sized images of

nine nude figures who are all members of Dumb Type including Furuhashi himself. Projected on

the gallery's four black walls, these bodies repeat standing, walking, running, and jumping. The

dim lights radiating from these ethereal figures and barely audible whispers from the eight-

channel of speakers add another sensory layer to the piece. A seven-story metal tower, which

bears two slide projectors and five video projectors and spins horizontally for fifteen minutes, is

placed in the center of a darkened and closed gallery room. These projectors' identical foci allow

these naked figures on the walls to pass through each other's bodies.

Barbara London, a former MoMA curator who was close to the members of Dumb Type

during her sabbatical year in Japan and first presented their works to a U.S. audience, describes

the "spectral" figures in *Lovers* as "drained of life," perhaps awaiting activation to come back to

life.[268] The viewers' physical presence in the gallery room plays that resurrecting role, thanks to

the sensors mounted on the ceiling. Once the sensors detect the viewers' movements, a ribbon of

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kansuru moderu jigyō jisshi hōkoku" タイムベースト・メディアを用いた美術作品の修復／
保存に関するモデル事業 実施報告 [Report of the Model Project on the Restoration and the
Preservation of Artworks using Time-based Media], 2015, http://www.kcua.ac.jp/arc/lovers/ (Accessed
December 15, 2021); Ben Fino-Radin, "Art in the Age of Obsolescence: Rescuing an Artwork from
Crumbling Technologies," December 21, 2016, https://stories.moma.org/art-in-the-age-of-obsolescence-
1272f1b9b92e (Accessed December 15, 2021).

[267] Teiji Furuhashi, *Lovers: Teiji Furuhashi* (Tokyo: Artlab, 1994), n.p.

[268] Barbara London, *Video Spaces: Eight Installations* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 21.

text that Furuhashi saw in New York's annual Gay Pride parades, "DO NOT CROSS THE LINE DO NOT CROSS THE LINE OR JUMP OVER," appears on a white linoleum floor and surrounds them.[269] In addition, his pre-recorded body, unlike those of the other performers in the videos, more directly responds to the ones outside of his own space, the viewers. When they walk closer to the walls, Furuhashi gazes into their faces or stretches his arms out to them. According to London's interpretation, the artist's personal gestures toward the viewers imply Furuhashi's rejection of the pessimistic diagnosis of the loss of humanity eroded by technology.[270] Not only does Furuhashi's body construct a surface confirming the viewers' presence inside the room, but the viewers' bodies also empower him to perceive his dying and loving existence. The interplay of on and off modes for his actions in the projected video denotes an in-between existential state of his body. And what activates those multilayered encounters with oneself and others is Furuhashi's flesh remaining as a surface.

The performers' bodily connection with the audience in *Lovers* enters a much more intricate and dynamic phase, as it is unclear who activates whose actions in the beginning. Is that the videotaped body of Furuhashi who walks toward the viewers? Or is that the viewers who let the sensors on the ceiling operate? By disrupting the temporal order and the spatial division of the performing event through technological intervention, Furuhashi's installation authorizes the bodies of both the audience and the performers to create engaging interfaces. Confronting such flesh boundaries of the performing bodies inside and outside the screens and the stages, how can we rethink communicating interfaces within a digitally reorganized world?

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[269] Trippi, 30.

[270] Ibid., 22.

The radiant quality of the body images on Furuhashi's projected screens alludes to the interface of the computer screen or any other type of electronic device. Considering the implication of the computer screen—and those of other media devices—as an essential interface for human interaction, Ishida explains,

> Imagine that I am looking at the interface of the PC now. While my mind is looking at the PC, the PC is converting my practices into digital symbol strings. This interface relationship is gradually becoming the default value of our daily life. When the digitization of the world is completed, these interfaces are everywhere [my translation].[271]

Simply put, these technological interfaces stand as the central mode through which we live collectively in the world. In *Lovers*, the bodily surfaces take those interfacing roles. The technologies Furuhashi brought into this piece in the mid-1990s, such as analog videos, 35mm slides, MS-DOS, and LaserDisc, are already outmoded and unworkable. However, his ways of exploring how people living in different times and spaces can interact with each other are still valid. We are facing such ontological and methodological transitions in interhuman relationships, in which an interface is "the default value" of the digitalized living condition. Here, the issue of how to practice the redefined boundaries through bodily surfaces becomes ever more crucial to understanding subjectivity.

3.3. Surfaces to Interfaces

The discursive alignment of the performers' bodies vis-à-vis the spectators is maximized and even reversed in the installation expansions of Dumb Type's performances. One such case is the installation version of *OR*, which entered the permanent collection of the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art in September 2000. Before its relocation to France, the *OR* installation had

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[271] Ishida, *Dijiteol midieoui ihae*, 134.

been in the permanent collection of the NTT InterCommunication Center (ICC) in Tokyo since

its creation in 1997.[272] What the viewers encountered in the ICC's gallery room is four flat

screens—or "laboratory slides" and "slabs" as the group describes them—arrayed on a white

floor **[Figure 3.8]**. Dressed in snowy attire reminiscent of hospital gowns, the seven *OR*

performers rise one by one to the glaring surfaces of the body-length screens.[273] Once the

viewers activate a hidden sensor, the performers make subtle and serene bodily motions to

Ikeda's sound as if they roll about in an operation bed, which is employed as the main prop in the

performance version to allude not only to the operation room but also to the border between life

and death. Thanks to the computer-controlled laser system that projects the recordings of the

performers' movements onto an LCD screen enfolded by two glass plates, their floating bodies

look almost unearthly, like stuffed specimen preserved in the screen, out of reach. Without a

prearranged position or direction of viewing, *OR*'s flat screens are placed on the floor level and

enable the viewers to freely roam around the installation space. The luminosity emanating from

the LCD screen and glass panels diminishes the depth of the immaculate space inside the videos

where the performers stay. The plain ground location of these mysterious moving images

effortlessly guides the spectators to look down on the screens and concentrate on the changes in

the performers' lying postures and facial expressions.

In the 2000 Lyon version of the *OR* installation **[Figure 3.9]**, each of the four screens is

buried in the protruded white square-shaped panels so that the height of the displays looks even

with the floor level where the viewers stand. The minimized edges between the screen and the

surrounding floor further muddle the spatial detachment of the moving bodies inside the videos

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[272] *DUMB TYPE 1984 2019*, 101.

[273] Dumb Type, "Artists' Statement," 1997. NTT InterCommunication Center website. https://www.ntticc.or.jp/en/archive/works/installation-or/ (Accessed December 15, 2021).

from the surface of the LCDs. As the installation view at the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art

illustrates, when the spectators approach the displayed images of the performers, the intense light

from the ceiling creates their shadows, which simultaneously come up to the screen surface and

lay on top of the bodies/screens. The viewers' shadows then force them to repeat getting closer

to and moving away from the bodies/screens until they determine the most proper distance and

comfortable relation with the people submerged in the images.

Shiro Takatani maintains that the audience tends to secure more control of their

spectatorial experience in an installation format than during live performance since there are no

limitations in terms of duration.[274] In Dumb Type's installations, such temporal authority over

one's viewing experience is vital to shaping a *skin-interface* as a communicative sphere. A *skin-interface* is formed in the audience's reflective actions of proceeding to and retreating from both

their bodies and those of the performers inside the screens or under surfaces. Aligned with the

viewers' bodies and the technological interfaces that mediate the subjects on both sides, the very

surface of the skin acts as an interactive site to *face* oneself in relation to others.

3.4. Skin-Interfaces as a Contact Zone

The immersive verve of *OR*'s *skin-interface* is fortified in another installation variation

combined with two subsequent Dumb Type performance projects, *memorandum* and *Voyage*.

Titled by assembling the name of three pieces, *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE* was created for

the 2014 exhibition "Seeking New Genealogies—Bodies / Leaps / Traces" held at the Museum

of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (MOT).[275] Instead of four separate screens resting on a gallery floor

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[274] Shiro Takatani, interview with the author, Kyoto, Japan, May 11, 2019.

[275] For this exhibition, see Yoshizaki, *Aratana keifugaku o motomete,* especially 126-31.

in parallel, a single upright 4K Vision display panel measuring 52.5 x 6.9 feet re-edits selected

scenes from past performances with additional footage shot for this occasion. The artists employ

up-to-date digital technologies with high-definition images and electronic sound streaming from

8.2-channel speakers that amplify the audience's visceral immersion into the piece erected in a

spacious exhibition room.

The three segments of *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE* provide viewers with various kinds

of *skin-interfaces*. First, the phantasmal bodies of the *OR* performers bathed in the floor screens,

whose visibility alternates between hazy and transparent in the earlier installation, now convene

into a single space of the wide display wall **[Figure 3.10]**. While the projection spreads a video

of eleven Dumb Type members who lay on a white bed sheet and gently toss and turn their

bodies, the shooting angle from above renders them as perpendicular on a wall/screen or wafting

inside a gravity-free space. As in the *OR* performance, a single vertical illumination band in a

slightly bigger size than the rectangular box confining those hibernating figures traverses the

entire screen endlessly by highlighting each body one by one. Meanwhile, a long and thin beam

of white light that horizontally bisects the display panel runs across the performers' bodies.

Reminiscent of *pH* and *OR* performances, the double movement of these two types of scanning

light reenacts the operation of the scanning devices or medical examination machines, which hint

at the status quo of the human body eternally surveilled and conditioned by technology. Since the

viewers sit or stand before the display panel, those strong lights also infiltrate into the surface of

their bodies, which serves as a *skin-interface*. As a physical plane of the concurrent inflection of

lights, this *skin-interface* provokes the viewers to question whose body is the real subject of such

technological scrutiny as in *Lovers*—is it the body of the performers inside the video or that of

the viewers swallowed by the audiovisual stimulation radiating from the piece?

The second part of the projection belongs to *memorandum* **[Figure 3.11]**, which juxtaposes fast-switching video footage of colorful scenery with dreamy silhouettes of human figures. These figures reside beyond the black surfaces inside the screen that simultaneously streams white texts derived from the performance version. These texts are moving upward too rapidly to follow with the human eye. The texts are also overlaid either with the scenery videos or the moving bodies of the performers until all the visual components turn into a single blinding vision of data and signals abstracted into lines, colors, light, and sound. By visualizing such an uncatchable pace of processing the world (in forms of images, texts, and bodies) into data, Dumb Type portrays human alienation from the digital construction of memories. Whereas the performance *memorandum* instantiates a *body-graph* through the performers in motion on the stage and against the screen, this installation presents their bodies entombed in the video as a *skin-interface*. The *memorandum* segment splits the widescreen into multiple units; some display pre-recorded images of unknown places, others show blank spaces that arrest the Dumb Type performers' dancing bodies superimposed with computer-generated texts. As the text layer comes forward into the figures' plane, the human bodies lose clarity and mostly appear in a mass with blurry contours. Their motion is slow compared to the flows of aligned images and texts, but the performers behind the semi-transparent surface nonetheless hold viewers' focus. Such an on-screen presence of the performers functions as a key to finding their way out of this digital maze and intertwining the elusive and sporadic information into a reality and a perpetual memory together.

Voyages (the installation version spells the title in plural form) comprises the last section of *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE* **[Figure 3.12]**. It was developed mainly from the 2004 installation at the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM) in Yamaguchi, Japan, which

reshaped the performance version of *Voyage* as an audiovisual projection using an aluminum panel placed on the gallery floor. Densely packed texts and navigational routes on fine gridlines spread through the expansive display panel.[276] As myriad tiny-sized white characters scattered on the massive black electronic board, Darwin's texts from *The Voyage of the Beagle* fashion an overwhelming visual of pixels even at the expense of the loss of legibility. Then, lines, colors, symbols, words, and numbers gradually move through the texts and combine to configure a nautical chart that traces Darwin's world travel route with the HMS Beagle in 1831–32. The nautical chart drawn on the screen keeps rotating and growing as an allegory of "voyage(s)" in the digital sea of information. If the texts abstracted at the level of pixels make the viewers disoriented in the decentralized spatiality, the navigational map on a grid of latitude and longitude assists them in locating their coordinates in the world. Unlike the previous two segments, no human bodies for projection and alignment appear. Instead, the viewers' bodies forge a *skin-interface* through which they embody particles of drifting data. As the ICC curator Minoru Hatanaka mentions, an "external input" is necessary for the completion of *Voyages*.[277] The bodily presence of the viewers, who are propelled to embody the circulation of data as a *skin-interface*, plays the role of an "external input" that can enrich and finish our voyages.

In their 2019–20 retrospective show, "Dumb Type | Actions + Reflections," Dumb Type artists added another interfacing layer to *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE.* Attached to the wall opposite a mesmerizing LED screen, *Trace-16* (2019) **[Figure 3.13]** consists of sixteen square-

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[276] For the entire project of *Voyage* and the first version *Voyages* presented at ICC, see Dumb Type, *Voyages* (Tokyo: NTT Pub. Co., 2002).

For the second *Voyages* installation recreated in 2004, see Fumi Hirota et al., eds., *Creativity Seen/Unseen in Art and Technology: A Compendium of Media Art and Performance from YCAM: 2003–2008* (Yamaguchi: Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media, 2011), 42-45.

[277] Minoru Hatanaka, "From *Voyage* to *Voyages*," in *Voyages*, 25.

shaped mirror panels arranged side by side in a stainless-steel composite frame. These mirrors were initially placed on the performing floor of *Voyage* as an essential staging device to create an illusion of the performers' bodies floating on water or in the air. In that sense, these mirrors bear the vestiges of the performance and the performers' bodily actions. Repositioned behind the audience of *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE* in the gallery room, *Trace-16*'s mirror panels, the same width of the video screen, reflect the bodies inside and outside the videos. Such overlapping of bodies continues to multiply on the surface of these mirrors, which also literally contain the traces of the performers' *body-graphs* that typed stories in *Voyage* performances that toured a number of cities over eight years. That is, the human bodies placed between *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE* and *Trace-16* become a *skin-interface* that eternally proliferates relations.

One may understand the various forms of written texts in Dumb Type's works as their overtly disciplinary stance toward the validity of languages in performance art such that "only the Dumb can muster." Or the texts might be simply a message-oriented element that expatiates what is not uttered by the performers. However, as the group's and Furuhashi's installation works reveal, the bodily reflection of the viewers who parallel the internal figures inside and beyond the screen expands the textuality of the human body in a material sense, not as an antagonistic domain of nonlanguage but as a mutually complementary "input."

My analytic concepts of the *body-graph* and the *skin-interface* demonstrate that the human body, as a new kind of textuality and as a somatic language of the future, is especially fundamental to an existential restoration of one's direct contact with others. This contact between people in a physical sense has been lessened in the current age of digitally networked or so-

called "un-tact" society, a new buzz word referring to a non-face-to-face socializing mode.[278]

How then can technologies bring back the face into the "contact zone" of a *skin-interface*? My

last case study of Manabe's experimental art investigates this question while also attending to

how Dumb Type's pursuit of the languages of the future through the human body has influenced,

or more precisely, how it has been "circulated" within, new media art in Japan.

4. Sensing, Synchronizing, Sympathizing

4.1. Daito Manabe and the Quantization of Bodies

Like most of the young generation of Japanese new media artists who have emerged in the new

millennium, Manabe has been working within the artistic legacy of Dumb Type's openness to

up-to-date media technologies.[279] Through the non-hierarchical relationship among group

members, both Dumb Type and Manabe's Rhizomatiks Research have showcased unique new

media art collaborations. For Fujimoto, the very term "collaboration"' most accurately describes

his experience as a member of Dumb Type. As their original name of "Dumb Type Theater"

suggests, the group's artistic identity developed in proximity to the idea of a theater troupe,

which cannot be managed or completed by a single artist. Fujimoto says, "we have naturally

developed a style of thinking and making everything together."[280] Such Dumb "Type" of

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[278] The term "un-tact" was coined in 2017 to describe non-face-to-face-centered commercial trends accelerated by the cutting-edge information communications technology (ICT) as "un-tact economy" in South Korea. With the global COVID-19 pandemic beginning in late 2019 to early 2020, it has been widely applied to the social realm of human activities that promote social distancing and online communications without direct contact. Nando Kim et al., *Teulendeu kolia 2018: seouldae sobi teulendeu bunseog senteoui 2018 jeonmang* 트렌드 코리아 2018: 서울대 소비 트렌드 분석 센터의 2018 전망 [Trend Korea 2018: Seoul National University Trend Research Center's Prospects for 2018] (Seoul: milaeui chang, 2017), 313-34.

[279] Hasegawa, "Seeking New Genealogies—Bodies/ Leaps/ Traces," 193.

[280] Takayuki Fujimoto, interview with the author, Kyoto, Japan, May 10, 2019.

"making everything together" provides a critical working model for the next generation of new media artists in Japan, including Manabe and his Rhizomatiks Research. In general, they self-fashion as transdisciplinary collectives who strategically keep their membership open. In art creation, there is an apparent tendency toward multidisciplinary and trans-professional partnerships across the binaries of art/science, theory/practice, academia/industry, and fine arts/popular arts.[281]

As Hasegawa points out, "Dumb Type's sensitivity and methodology, as scanned body information, lead to an orientation toward hyper digital analysis which was inherited by two artists. One is Ka Fai Choy, and the other is Daito Manabe of the Rhizomatiks, both of whom have spoken of being influenced by Dumb Type."[282] Indeed, Dumb Type's stages, especially Ikeda's sound, which conveys music in both temporal and spatial senses, showed what was a new approach to music for Manabe, who grew up in a family of musicians but majored in mathematics. Through "the encounter with Ikeda's sound," Manabe ventured into so-called media art that is unencumbered by the binary of success and failure with multiple possibilities. His frequent visits to the ICC after that "encounter" eventually led him to enter the Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences (IAMAS) in Ogaki, Japan, where Manabe produced his first media art piece in 2002.[283] Since then, Manabe has participated as a visual programmer for Shiro Takatani's image-sound installation, *LIFE–fluid, inviable, inaudible….* (2007), collaborated with Ryuichi Sakamoto, the Japanese avant-garde composer and one of the key contributors to Paik's

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[281] Hiroki Tsutsui, "Zengo Nippon no ato korekutibushi" 前後日本のアート・コレクティブ史 [A History of Post-war Japanese Art Collectives], *Bijutsu techo* 70, no. 1066 (April 2018): 114-24.

[282] Hasegawa, "Seeking New Genealogies—Bodies/ Leaps/ Traces," 193.

[283] Tamaki Sugihara, "Manabe daito intabyū" 真鍋大度インタビュー [Manabe Daito Interview], *Bijutsu techo* 69, no. 1048 (January 2017): 24-25.

two satellite projects—*Bye Bye Kipling* and *Wrap Around the World*.[284] During his artist

residency at YCAM, Manabe also designed sound programs for several LED dance

performances directed by Fujimoto, including *Refined Colors* (2004) and *True* (2007).

While assisting on the solo projects of Dumb Type artists as a member of the technical

staff in the mid-2000s, Manabe digested their working style, which he applied to run his own art

collective. Analogous to the Dumb "Type" of *Pafōmansu* creation, the majority of Manabe's

projects are results of teamwork within Rhizomatiks. He established this trans-disciplinary

creators' circle in 2006 to present technology-supported projects ranging widely in purpose from

advertising, promotion, and installation works for museums and art festivals to pop entertainment

and stage performances. In July 2016, Rhizomatiks was subdivided into three independent

sections—Research, Design, and Architecture. With his long-time collaborator Motoi Ishibashi

(b.1984), Manabe currently leads Rhizomatiks Research, which concentrates on artistic

investigation using a broad spectrum of state-of-the-art technologies, such as VR, AR, robots,

personal mobility devices, drones, 3D scanning, blockchain, artificial intelligence, and machine

learning.[285]

On top of the collaboration-oriented working style, another critical artistic influence

Manabe inherited from Dumb Type is his astuteness in addressing the human body's post-

translational communicative potency as an interface. The body as an interface serves as the

central theme and material support of his new media art creations. He states, "I think of the body

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[284] For Shiro Takatani's collaboration with Sakamoto, see Ryuichi Sakamoto and Shiro Takatani, *Life– fluid, invisible, inaudible...* (Tokyo: NTT Pub. Co., 2007); Ryuichi Sakamoto and Shiro Takatani, *LIFE– TEXT* (Tokyo: NTT Pub. Co., 2010), especially 173-90.

[285] For the history of Rhizomatiks, see Mio Nakajima, "Tsugi kara mirai no saishin o tsudzukeru raizomati ku su no rekishi" 次から未来の最新を続けるライゾマティくスの歴史 [The History of Rhizomatiks Who Continues the Latest from the Next to the Future], *Bijutsu techo* 69, no. 1048 (January 2017): 62-71.

at the center of the performance not as a display but as an interface between external data and internal data (memory, sensation, etc.)."[286] Like Dumb Type, a synchronized movement of bodies in Manabe's practice, from his earlier experimental devices to Rhizomatiks Research's multi-media collaborations with Japanese hi-tech dance company Elevenplay, is systematized as sensory codes and eventually as a technological agency of communication that no longer involves the indirectness and non-simultaneity inherent in the act of translation.

Manabe's project for devising a sensory device, what he calls *Facial Visualizer* or *Facial Instrument*, epitomizes his innovative approach to the human body's interfacing with computational devices, programming, and digital data that significantly reshape how we relate to others. Conceived and produced in his formative years as a new media artist, this visualizing instrument exemplifies Manabe's continuous effort to manipulate a human's facial muscles or duplicate another person's expression by utilizing myoelectric sensors, low-frequency pulse generators, LED, and software programming. His YouTube channel "daito manabe" (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCg_m3Y7A_K12cvIDNxzhH4A) documents his repeated trials, including the failed ones, over multiple years in a series of test videos. These videos feature him testing these devices attached to his own body parts, sometimes accompanied by his fellow artists.[287]

For instance, *sensor experiment at YCAM 3* (2007) presents the artist making rhythmic beats through myoelectric sensors connected to his arms without touching his DJ equipment and musical instruments. He wrote a two-word description "groove quantized" in the comment

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[286] Yoshizaki, *Aratana keifugaku o motomete*, 136.

[287] Up until December 2021, over 385 test videos and excerpts from the final versions have been uploaded to Manabe's YouTube channel. He opened this channel in 2006, as a supplementary platform to present his works in addition to his official artist website http://www.daito.ws/#2. (Accessed December 15, 2021).

section of this video.[288] Derived from physics and electronics, this term "quantize" indicates that Manabe aims to formalize analog bodily movements and sensations into calculable and sharable digital information, the fundamental idea encompassing his entire artistic corpus. I read this gesture as corresponding to how performers' bodily motions on the Dumb Type stage (e.g., the repeated synchronization in *pH*) construct a *body-graph* as an alternative language through a patternization.

In relation to the context of translating bodily movements into controllable signals, Manabe's technical contribution with his myoelectric sensors to the sound-light-dance stage performance *True*, which was directed by Fujimoto in 2007, is especially noteworthy.[289] Manabe developed the programs for the myoelectric sensors attached to the bodies of two performers (Tsuyoshi Shirai and Dumb Type's Takao Kawaguchi) that detect their muscle movements and the wave transducers planted on other props on the stage, which activate and control the interactive operation of the LED light, sound, and visual projection to build an extraordinary sensory spectacle. As a prequel to the *Facial Visualizer* or *Facial Instrument*, Manabe's myoelectric sensors that make the human body respond to environmental stimuli in *True* oriented him to the faces that act both as a *body-graph* and a *skin-interface* through which we synchronize our senses. In particular, the ways in which multiple faces are aligned in his practice abbreviate one crucial post-translational mode of shaping interactivity and collective feelings.

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[288] Daito Manabe's YouTube page, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVmkTVXvekk. (Accessed December 15, 2021).

[289] For the details of this project, see *Creativity Seen/Unseen in Art and Technology*, 96-103. Also, see Fujimoto's interview, Takayuki Fujimoto, Takao Kawaguchi, and Eiko Tsuboike, "The World of Takayuki Fujimoto, A Lighting Artist at the Forefront in Japan's Multimedia Performance Scene," *Performing Arts Network Japan*, July 31, 2009. https://performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/0907/1.html (Accessed December 15, 2021).

4.2. Aligned Faces

Inspired by the 18th-century neurologist Duchenne de Boulogne's study on muscle-control

technology and the *Artifacial* project (1993–) by Dutch artist Arthur Elsenaar (b.1962), Manabe

embarked on the *Electric Stimulus to Face-Test* series, which records the progress of his

experiments as sorts of video performances in 2008.[290] A smile shutter function that

automatically detects the smiling figures on the frame of a digital camera enabled him to develop

a more specific theme for the series: "is it possible to copy one person's facial expression into

another's?" He then began from a sort of contrarian point by formulating electronic signals to

control one's facial expressions.[291] He attached myoelectric sensors to his facial muscles that

shape looks, such as the temples, the eyebrows, the ridges of the nose, and the cheeks, so that

each part moves through a pre-designed computer program. With background music that

resembles Ikeda's electronic sound for Dumb Type's performances, Manabe caused his facial

muscles to move as if they were dancing to the beat.

  In a 2008 video clip, *Copy My Facial Expression into My Friends'—Test 0* **[Figure 3.14]**,

Manabe tries to transplant his facial expressions onto the faces of two friends through a "copy

and paste" mechanism. Shot in the casual atmosphere of his workstation, this test video shows

three people with several electrodes taped to their temples and cheeks. Manabe in the middle

creates exaggerated expressions by pouting his lips, blinking eyes, and raising eyebrows with a

facial tic, as the sensors stimulate zygomatic and corrugator superciliary muscles that control

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[290] Daito Manabe, Artist talk in conjunction with the exhibition "Lucid Motion," Artechouse, Washington, DC. September 30, 2019; G. B. Duchenne de Boulogne, *The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression,* trans. and ed. R. Andrew Cuthbertson (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1990); Arthur Elsenaar and Remko Scha, "Electric Body Manipulation as Performance Art: A Historical Perspective," *Leonardo Music Journal* 12 (2002): 17-28.

[291] Sugihara, "Manabe daito intabyū," 26.

smiles and frowns. Through the electrical stimuli programed by him, his friends make the same parts of their faces move after a brief time-lag so that their countenance is synched with Manabe's.

Uploaded to his YouTube channel two years later, *Electric Stimulus to Body + Myoelectric Sensor Test 1(Daito Manabe + Masaki Teruoka)* (2010) **[Figure 3.15]** shows another manipulative variation. In this video, Manabe's myoelectric sensor-equipped fingers are playing the skin surfaces of his fellow artist Masaki Teruoka, who produced the sensors, as if his body is a musical keyboard. Manabe's touching fingers control Teruoka's facial expressions against his will. These examples address the ways in which Manabe's experiment treats the human face as both an input and an output device for designing, dispersing, and sharing emotions, in alignment with the mediating operation of a *skin-interface* in Furuhashi's and Dumb Type's installations. In Manabe's exploratory application of this facial visualizing instrument to his own and his friends' bodily surfaces, the human face becomes a more intuitive and straightforward interface. Put differently, his experimentation constructs the human face as a visual, tactile, and even kinesthetic agency for post-translational communication that substitutes verbal forms of language.

Manabe transferred his experiment with electronic sensors from a personal laboratory to public performances in the contexts of art festivals or local community workshops—both in a live demonstration of the *Facial Visualizer* and in a video installation. The expansion and elaboration of how to exhibit and share this sensory instrument generated an enhanced sense of sympathy for viewers instigated by the aligned and synchronized countenances. An 11-minute video, *Face Visualizer, Instrument, and Copy* (2009) **[Figure 3.16]**, most succinctly showcases such a process moving from sensing, to synchronizing, to sympathizing. Manabe usually exhibits

this piece with an LED TV mounted on a gallery wall and accompanied by headphones.

Arranged in a six-by-six grid, thirty-six faces wearing Manabe's myoelectric sensor devices

appear on a multi-sectioned TV screen. Throughout the whole screening, these actors, or

Manabe's test subjects, produce almost identical muscle movements on their faces, sensing his

designed electronic stimuli. Each grid cell focuses only on the relevant facial part of the test

subjects appearing on a white background, highlighting the unified compliance of their facial

movements to sensory stimuli. The electronic background sound perfectly aligns with the

choreography of their muscle movements and adds dynamism to Manabe's stimulating program

that is getting faster and more complicated.

This format of grouping different actors responding to identical stimuli together is often

used to visualize human desire for sympathy and collective feelings that transcend

spatiotemporal distances. For instance, mainly circulated via Internet-based video sharing

platforms and video hosting services, so-called reaction videos are fundamentally grounded in

human nature as one that pursues forming a bond of sympathy. Reaction videos refer to video

content in which someone reacts to something that induces emotional and/or physical responses,

most of which are "written" upon their face.[292] Given the fact that these videos generally use a

bust shot composition and zoom in on a face rather than show the full-length body of the creator,

the reacting faces of others become the very content of the viewer's reactions. Furthermore, such

desire for learning and thus sharing others' feelings is intensified in the reaction videos that

collage and sync multiple reactions from different creators. The mixture of talking sounds from

each source video also makes the viewers of that reaction compilation attend to how the reaction

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[292] For the definition of reaction videos, see, for example, Sam Anderson, "Watching People Watching
People Watching," *New York Times Magazine*, November 25, 2011.

appears in faces and bodily gestures rather than verbal expression. That is, in their formal

structure that arranges multiple videos on a single screen, both Manabe's *Face Visualizer,*

Instrument, and Copy and reaction videos establish the exhibiting tactics and aesthetics of

sharing and belonging, amplified by the visual, aural, and kinesthetic alignment of faces.

In the collaborative project with Japanese choreographer Mikiko (b.1977) and her

contemporary dance troupe Elevenplay, Manabe's fascination with the human face as an

emotional conveyer has shifted to another direction, from the real to the virtual.[293] Presented at

the Laforet Museum Harajuku, Tokyo, in 2011, a dance performance *iPad Scene [dot.]* **[Figure**

3.17] orchestrates the bodily motions of the fourteen dancers on stage with the iPad they carry

for almost the entire duration of the show. Through the software program produced by Manabe

and Higa Satoru (b.1983), his fellow artist from Rhizomatiks Research, the moving images

played on the device, including a sheer field of colors, abstract designs, and the dancers' faces,

perfectly blend with Mikiko's choreography. The pre-recorded video of each Elevenplay dancer

appears on the iPad screen and responds to their rhythmic bodily motions. One of the most

dramatic scenes emerges when the faces on the iPad screen replace the real faces of the dancers

on stage. If they lift the device to eye level, the screen shows the closed-ups of the eyes of the

performers. If they turn their bodies left, it displays the right profile of their heads. In addition,

designed by Dumb Type's Fujimoto, the strobing lights are momentarily blacked out so that only

the faces on the iPad screens remain on the stage like a line of dots floating in the air. These

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[293] Since their first collaboration for the Japanese female pop dance trio Perfume's live concert at Tokyo Dome in 2010, Rhizomatiks Research and Elevenplay have worked together to produce interaction-oriented dance performances. Showhey Hashimoto, "Karada hyōgen to tekunorojī no kankei ga entāteimento o kaeru" 身体表現とテクノロジーの関係がエンターテイメントを変える [The Relationship Between Body Expression and Technology Changes Entertainment], *Bijutsu techo* 69, no. 1048 (January 2017): 83.

faces on screen become the sole medium mediating between the performers and the audience. In *iPad Scene [dot.]*, the digitally re-coded human faces, working both as a *body-graph* and a *skin-interface*, take on the instrumental role of connecting each other and relating to the audience.

Produced under the influence of the Dumb "Type" collaboration-based working style, employment of technology in art creation, and emphasis on the human body's potential as a mode of interaction, Manabe's practice, both as a single artist and as a member of Rhizomatiks Research, establishes a crucial case of how Japanese new media art has engaged with the languages of the future. His artistic and technological navigation of faces, which are aligned with other on screen-surfaces, shows one exemplary process in which the sense of post-translational belonging is expanded from one to a group, from the personal to the public, and from the actual to the virtual through technological intervention into the ways of relating.

5. Conclusion: Be on the Screen

This chapter analyzed the distinctive ways that Dumb Type's multi-media performances and installations and Manabe's electronic device-based projects experiment with the mechanism through which contemporary spectators navigate their positions within the world by heightening their sensory attachment to others. In particular, I tracked the evolutionary process of how the dimension of interhuman communication expanded to multisensorial, performative, and reflective stages of belonging beyond the merely linguistic. To this end, I examined the historical and technological conditions in which Dumb Type and Manabe's Rhizomatiks Research carried out such a task by circumventing the existing structure of language translation. Their works demonstrate the heuristic operation of the human body that constructs a vital communicative agency. In terms of local specificity, these Japanese artists were educated and began their artistic

career under the banner of globalization supported by many newly emerging institutions and corporations devoted to media art that accompanied the rapid transition from the analog to the digital over the last three decades. Thus, I discussed the ways in which these artists raise crucial questions regarding the current modes of communication, especially the verbal and written forms of language systems, by making their operations precarious and invalid.

In conclusion, I argue for the Dumb Type artists and Manabe as representative of a new kind of theorist-practitioners, and for their works of art as affective gestures that activate a sense of belonging with a radically new interactive mechanism beyond our limited linguistic and cultural knowledge. Thus, my case studies have underlined the role of human bodies—those of both performers and spectators— through my analytic concepts of the *body-graph* and the *skin-interface*. The works of Dumb Type reconceived the performers' physical presence on stage as a graph that carries meanings and feelings which cannot be fully delivered through texts or speech. *memorandum* wove an altered sense of collective memory through the performers' bodies that shepherd the audience to read what is not spoken but "typed" through a *body-graph*. The blurred boundaries between the performers and the viewers activated such communal engagement in Furuhashi's *Lovers*, and Dumb Type's *OR* installation and *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE*. These interactive installations compose *skin-interfaces* through mirrored, paralleled, and multiplied projections of bodily surfaces on stage and screen. Finally, Manabe's myoelectric sensor device and software programming for the visual, haptic, and kinesthetic instrumentalization of human faces reconfigured the skin surfaces as not just present but as a significant circuit that transmits signals, generates meanings, and thus promotes bonding beyond language. What other avenues await our bodies to extend and rethink how we relate to each other?

Conclusion

Attachment after Translation

News from Nowhere (2009–) is an ongoing multi-part project initiated by two South Korean

artists, Moon Kyungwon (b.1969) and Jeon Joonho (b.1969). With a group of architects,

designers, engineers, scientists, poets, philosophers, film directors, and curators mainly from (but

not limited to) South Korea and Japan, they form an interdisciplinary and transnational platform

through which spectators can muse on their social and artistic present with the aesthetic and

theoretical lens of the rhetorical future.[294] For example, a two-channel HD film installation *El

Fin del Mundo* [The End of the World] (2012) **[Figure 4.1]** visually and technologically fuses

the ideas, questions, experiments, and artworks produced in the transdisciplinary platform of

News from Nowhere. This film synopsizes a future community and its aesthetics and cultures

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[294] *News from Nowhere* has progressed through five phases: (1) Moon and Jeon's conversations about the artistic vision and value of the future with intellectuals in fields of culture, philosophy, science, politics, and religion from around the world; (2) the production of various images and objects designed for the future society (architecture, costume, a portable water bottle, a mask, and a lung, etc.) in collaboration with other artists, architects, designers, and engineers; (3) the creation of HD films narrated in a future-retrospective perspective by featuring those future-oriented lifestyle items; (4) book publications and a website *News from Nowhere* (www.newsfromnowhere.kr) as an open resource to document each process; and (5) archival exhibitions and a workshop series, what they call a "Mobile Agora."

Up until December 2021, Moon and Jeon had published books about the *News from Nowhere* project in five editions with slightly different organization and content: a Korean version, an English version, a catalog for their exhibition for the 2012 Korea Artist Prize at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, and catalogs for their 2015 exhibition at Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, and their 2018 Tate Liverpool exhibition. Kyungwon Moon and Joonho Jeon, *Mijieseo on sosik* 미지에서 온 소식 [News from Nowhere], trans. Hyunkyung Kim (Seoul: Workroom Press, 2012); Kyungwon Moon and Joonho Jeon, *News from Nowhere: A Platform for the Future & Introspection of the Present*, trans. Hyunkyung Kim and Richard Harris (Seoul: Workroom Press, 2012); Kyungwon Moon and Joonho Jeon, *News from Nowhere: A Platform for the Future & Introspection on the Present* (Seoul: National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Korea, 2013); Heike Munder, ed., *MOON Kyungwon and JEON Joonho News from Nowhere: Zurich Laboratory* (Zurich: Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 2015); Kyungwon Moon and Joonho Jeon, *News from Nowhere* (Seoul: Workroom Press, 2019).

conceived by human beings born after the end of the Earth. An ambivalent, even dystopic vision, the artists imagine this new world as being a highly controlled society run by a selected few corporations.[295] Resonating with Nam June Paik's satellite trick with a split screen that glues the people in distant locations together on a single TV canvas, *El Fin del Mundo* dwells on a pair of screens. Placed side by side, each screen represents the times before and after the catastrophe that brought about the end of the current era. On the left, "he" (Jungjae Lee) is immersed in creating artwork in his studio, undeterred by the approaching tragedy. The right screen features "she" (Soojung Lim) isolated in a spaceship-like workstation. "She" is investigating and archiving relics from the past, some of which appear in artworks on the left screen. As her research progresses, "she" gradually senses the existence of "he" and what he is doing—making art. The film ends with her escape from the new world that hints at the forthcoming encounter between two protagonists across time. Moon and Jeon manifest that there is no actual "end" of the world by simultaneously presenting two points in time that interact with each other through art. The world continues as such, and people are permanently attached to each other even as they live in other space-times.

Compellingly unfolding such an uncanny scenario, *El Fin del Mundo* and the larger *News from Nowhere* project insist on the centrality of arts and aesthetics to any future society and its sustainability. This questioning of how contemporary art contributes to our understanding of the shared present for a better future continues in the offshoots of *News from Nowhere*, such as *Avyakta* (2012), *The Ways of Folding Space & Flying* (2015), *Anomaly Stroll* (2018), and *News*

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[295] As the story of *El Fin del Mundo* is grounded in Moon and Jeon's artistic response to the 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, climate change and related natural disasters are the main reason for the extinction of the current humankind and civilization in this film. Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho. interview with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 26, 2018.

from Nowhere: Freedom Village (2021). By describing the never-ending contacts between the humans transcending different space-times shot in various backgrounds, these films address the necessity of a global and planetary platform for collective actions, without the discriminations, biases, and hierarchies that detach us from others. The characters of the *News from Nowhere* films form an intimacy across varied spatiotemporal distances, not through their verbal or written communications but a sense of empathy felt in non-verbal, non-literal, and bodily traces of others, such as visual sensations, sounds, touches, smells, and an overall ambiance. I find such an absorption into an intensive sensory attachment between the present and the future akin to the generative state of *tabula rasa*, a lacuna, a porosity, an interstice, a cleft, and a void of languages that I focused on in the main chapters. These terms metaphorically account for the possibility of producing the creative ground of post-translational belonging, as the technologically augmented feelings sensed and carried by human bodies replace the role of languages as a connective link to others.

Moon and Jeon have developed *News from Nowhere* as a transnational site-specific series that tours Kassel, Seoul, Chicago, Zurich, Venice, Liverpool, and Kanazawa, by embracing much more diverse voices and visions into a discursive platform for the global present through the future—what they name a laboratory.[296] With their artistic efforts to enact a transdisciplinary approach, transnational collaboration, and collective spectatorship, the platform of *News from Nowhere* inherits the methods and practices of wiring the wireless community that Paik cultivated with his 1984 invaders. Nearly three decades apart from each other, the works of

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[296] The main venues for the exhibiting the *News from Nowhere* project include dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel, Germany (2012), the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea (2012/2021), the Sullivan Galleries, School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2013), Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Switzerland (2015), the 56th Venice Biennale, Italy (2015), Tate Liverpool, UK (2018–9), and 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (2022).

Moon and Jeon take up Paik's concern with how humans may seize control of new media technology, rather than be subordinated to it, to think about the significance and function of art in enriching our communicative experiences as the plural us.

The works from Moon and Jeon's transnational laboratories contain two remarkable parallels with Paik's space-opera trilogy. First, both Paik's satellite performances and *News from Nowhere* derive their rhetorical frames from western utopian/dystopian classics that write the future in ways that critically intervene into their narratives and provide a new ending with trans-East Asian inflections. As I discussed in Chapter One, Paik constructed his artistic statement for the global—and even planetary—connection via satellite with his tactful appropriation of English literature, such as George Orwell's scenario of the gloomy future in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Joseph Rudyard Kipling's asseveration of the vast distance between the East and the West in *The Ballad of East and West*. Likewise, Moon and Jeon borrow the title of their project from the novel *News from Nowhere: An Epoch of Rest Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance* (1890), written by British artist, writer, and activist William Morris (1834–96). This novel narrates the protagonist William Guest's visit from Victorian England to his dreamy future world, realizing Morris's hoped-for socialist society that has neither private ownership nor division between art, work, and life—what he deems a romantic utopia.[297] If *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* portrays how Paik revised Orwell's picture of 1984 by networking art and people across the Atlantic through his satellite practice, Moon and Jeon resurrect Guest's time-travel experience as a vital space for contemplating how we connect and live together.

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[297] William Morris, *News from Nowhere: An Epoch of Rest, Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance* (Boston: Roberts, 1891).

Both artists placed their emphasis on technology as not only an essential element in the time-based narratives of Orwell and Morris but also an operating strategy to actualize their artistic experiments. In addition, Paik's satellite pieces and *News from Nowhere* transform the century-old western idea of the imaginary future into the region-specific collaborative research and practice of the global and planetary contemporary. These contemporary works now count on the enlarged readership and viewership for media art made possible through the development of new media technologies and platforms, unimaginable to Morris and Orwell. I interpret the spectatorial expansion provoked by both Paik's and Moon and Jeon's projects as imperative gestures for the inclusion of ideas, perspectives, and beliefs alienated or neglected by processes of reflecting, constructing, and theorizing our collective future envisioned in and disseminated from so-called First World arts and discourse.

One of the most significant differences is that the *News from Nowhere* project proposes the spatial twist of temporality as one of the key aspects of the new media art space. As my analysis of *Wrap Around the World* coupled with the aesthetic of *furoshiki* revealed in Chapter One, Paik topologically reconceptualized the globe. It became something "wrappable" and thus suddenly invalidated an existing physical sense of distance. This haptic metaphor for the spatiotemporal de-perception and re-perception of the world lingers as something "foldable" in Moon and Jeon's site-specific multi-channel film installation, *The Ways of Folding Space & Flying* **[Figure 4.2]**, presented at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. The title of the work refers to two supernatural powers in Korean words, *chukjibeop* 축지법 and *bihaensul* 비행술, which enable one to move across times and spaces by "folding a space" and "flying" in the sky.[298]

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[298] Jean-Max Colard, *Moon Kyungwon & Jeon Joonho, In Situ in the Future* (Seoul: Arts Council Korea, 2016), 33.

For the Korean Pavilion, Moon and Jeon installed a laboratory-looking futuristic building in the Giardini garden in Venice. The first screen on the outer wall features a post-human being who repeats a series of tedious tasks alone inside the building. When viewers enter the actual building, they encounter a second screen that shows a female character clad in traditional Venetian dress and played by the same actress who plays the protagonist in the laboratory scene outside—and "she" in *El Fin del Mundo*.[299] By depicting one's simultaneous belonging to different temporal locations and cultural contexts through these separate video projections, *The Ways of Folding Space & Flying* compels viewers to reconsider the conditions under which they define and experience their relative positions in the world and to imagine alternative ways of identifying themselves. In a way similar to Paik's "wrapping" of the globe in the mid-1980s, Moon and Jeon's piece disrupts, twists, and "folds" the linear sense of time, presenting us with a critical new approach to the perception of one's individual and collective subjectivities at this increasingly uncertain but crucial juncture of digital globalization.

With my brief exploration of the *News from Nowhere* project, I do not intend to insist that Moon and Jeon completed the vital task of building the post-translational belonging initiated and pursued by Paik in his satellite works. Instead, I argue that many new media artists working in East Asian circuits have shared such intense desire and sense of urgency for devising modes of collective attachment beyond languages for multiple decades. In this regard, this dissertation demonstrates that post-translational modes of thinking, addressing, and interacting as an artistic attitude can serve as a critical domain for the study of trans-East Asian new media art. As discussed in the main chapters, the formation of such creative and reflective platforms for shared

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[299] For a detailed analysis of this piece and Moon and Jeon's Venice Biennale projects, see Sook-Kyung Lee, ed., *The Ways of Folding Space & Flying: A Project by Moon Kyungwon & Jeon Joonho* (London: Cultureshock Media, 2015), especially 18-63.

thinking—regardless of discrete literary traditions, temporal estrangements, and existing systems of language—constitute the primary goal, claim, and action that bind new media art practices created in the transnational circuits of East Asia. By centering on such constant interest and investigation in the triangular relationships between media technology, collectivity, and languages, this dissertation presented one critical framework for historicizing, theorizing, and revitalizing the development of new media art in trans-East Asian circuits.

The six artists and artists' groups examined in this dissertation promote the languages of the future in a variety of new media art forms that ultimately stimulate us to critically assess the current structure of transnational communication and envision alternative modes of interaction that I call post-translational belonging. One of the key motivations of post-translational belonging relates to the devastation of existing systems of language revolving around the hegemony of English. My case studies on the languages of the future in trans-East Asian new media art attend to such a non-linguistic realm of attachment after translation as a sort of negation, a break, a clash, an imperfection, unfriendliness, disability, or an absence, which push us to circumvent languages.

While working on this dissertation project, I encountered such negative space of translation through my habitual practice with dictionaries. As a non-native English speaker, my linguistic life in American academia heavily relies on dictionaries. A word in a dictionary consists of numbered definitions, but none of them satisfies me as such in most cases. Or it is more precise to say that translation can never be perfect and "pure," only partial at best. The act of language translation betrays its optimistic premise to solve interlingual communication. Thus, post-translational belonging as the core concept of this dissertation contributes to the discourse on

new media art that broadens the range of human interaction and forges collective attachment after translation through the languages of the future.

Paik had an issue similar to mine perhaps from a much earlier age and multiple times: when the colonial status of his home country demanded that the young boy use Japanese while in school; when he traveled to Hong Kong as his father's interpreter; when he began studying electronic music in Germany; and when he relocated to the U.S. The archival materials and artworks I scrutinized in Chapter One inform us that Paik was always in a sort of inter-language state, which is "circuitry, electronic, switching." This inter-language state resembles the media space he was so deeply immersed in and ultimately led him to recreate it as an encountering platform in a cosmic dimension. The three artists examined in Chapter Two deem current written language systems limited for the broader readership and thus endeavor to reinvigorate the sensory domain of "bookless literature, paperless poem." If Masaki Fujihata's *Beyond Pages* and *anarchive* publication redefine our haptic experience of reading a book, Xu Bing embeds the ocular algorithm of post-translational communication in his *Book from the Ground* series. Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries' user-unfriendly text animations on screen evoke a sense of disorientation resulting from the conversion of literary contents into multisensory and kinesthetic signs and signals. In Chapter Three, I articulated how Dumb Type's performative strategy of being "dumb" extends the function of the human body as an affective agent and an alternative to verbal languages and written letters that operate beyond translation. Also, Daito Manabe's experimentation with a face visualizer reflects his creative efforts to formalize muscle movements and bodily sensations into communicative information that might allow us to no longer lean on linguistic translation.

The new media we use daily, from the conventional formats of film, radio, and TV, to newer media, such as computers, Internet platforms for accessing information and sharing content, social media, and teleconferencing programs, construct the most significant condition for how the global is perceived and how global contacts are performed at a distance, in the here and now. In particular, the accelerated digital regime not only simplifies the global networking process but also orients us to life in a polyglot condition even before we notice it. The amount of information transmitted via digital media is too vast, and its contents are too complex and sensory to rely solely and insensitively on translated languages. My dissertation brought this media-saturated present into the critical study and understanding of the shared future through the languages of the future formed in trans-East Asian circuits of new media art.

To accomplish this, I first repositioned Paik within the trans-East Asian genealogy of conceiving global intimacy in terms of languages in Part One. Part Two offered two historical approaches to frame how new media art in this regional circuit has continued and advanced Paik's legacy with the languages of the future. Chapter Two on the sensorial reshaping of our reading practice in the works of Fujihata, Xu Bing, and YHCHI addresses a synchronic standpoint by attending to the necessity of post-translational languages of the future formed across East Asia. Focused on the development of Japanese new media art after 1984, especially from Dumb Type to Manabe, Chapter Three provided a diachronic context to demonstrate that such a shared desire for post-translational connection resulted in conceiving human bodies as a "body-graph" and a "skin-interface." By challenging the geopolitical hierarchies of English, Roman letters, and conventional language systems in historicizing, theorizing, and revitalizing human endeavors to establish collectivity through art, this dissertation revised the Western-centric accounts of East Asia and contemporary East Asian art.

Illustrations

Figure 1.1 Nam June Paik, *Untitled Sketch with Notes*, undated, oil stick on paper, 18 x 24 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.246); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.2 Nam June Paik, *Key to the Highway (Rosetta Stone)*, 1995, intaglio, relief etching, silk screen, 34 x 28 in. Nam June Paik Art Center, Yongin, South Korea.

Figure 1.3 *Untitled Test Print,* undated, digital print on paper, sheet: 17 x 11 in, image: 11 1/2 x 11 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.124); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.4 *Untitled Test Print,* undated, digital print on paper, sheet: 17 x 11 in, image: 8 3/4 x 8 3/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.127); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.5 Nam June Paik and John Godfrey, *Global Groove* video still, 1973, single-channel video, 28:30 min. color, sound © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.6 Nam June Paik, *Untitled (Television)*, ca. 1970, oil stick on paper, 22 x 29 7/8 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.31); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.7 Nam June Paik, *Cage TV Sketch*, ca. 1970, oil stick on paper, 18 x 24 1/8 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.78); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.8 Nam June Paik, "*Cage" TV Sketch*, undated, oil stick on paper, 18 x 24 1/8 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.79); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.9 Nam June Paik, *64 TV*, 1996, paint on canvas, 30 x 24 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.PS.157); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.10 Nam June Paik, Letter to John J. O'Connor ("dear Saviour of video Art!!!"), n.d., original typescript letter with additions in ink and pencil, 11 x 8 7/8 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.4.EPH.28F); Gift from Seymour Barofsky for the Estate of John J. O'Connor.

Figure 1.11 Nam June Paik, *Zenith,* from *V-Idea, a priori*, 1984, etching and aquatint, 11 7/8 × 14 7/8 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Dodie Kazanjian and Calvin Tomkins, 2018.

Figure 1.12 Joseph Beuys, Douglas Davis, and Nam June Paik, *Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast* video still, 1977, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.13 *ARTnews* magazine with inscription ("For John O'Connor"), 1982, printed paper, softbound, with additions in crayon, 11 x 8 1/2 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.4.EPH.4A); Gift from Seymour Barofsky for the Estate of John J. O'Connor. © ARTnews, LLC; cover photo by Michael Halsband/Landov.

Figure 1.14 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, 1984, postcard, 4 1/4 x 6 1/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.15 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("George Plimpton") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.16 Nam June Paik, Illustration for *Good Morning Mr. Orwell*, from a booklet for a VHS set, *SAT-ART III* (Tokyo: SONY, 1988), p. 54.

Figure 1.17 Nam June Paik, *1984 Invaders*, from *V-Idea, a priori*, 1984, etching and aquatint, 11 7/8 ×
14 7/8 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Dodie Kazanjian and Calvin Tomkins, 2018.

Figure 1.18 Nam June Paik, Illustration for *Bye Bye Kipling*, from a booklet for a VHS set, *SAT-ART III* (Tokyo: SONY, 1988), p. 80.

Figure 1.19 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* video still*, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.20 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* video still*, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.21 Nam June Paik, Illustration for *Wrap Around the World*, from a booklet for a VHS set, *SAT-ART III* (Tokyo: SONY, 1988), p. 21.

Figure 1.22 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* video still, 1988, single-channel video, 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.23 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* video still, 1988, live version, 82:50 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1988 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.24 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* video still, 1988, live version, 82:50 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1988 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.25 Frank Lopes, Set design of *Wrap Around the World*, 1988, photomechanical print, 12 3/4 × 8 1/2 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.PAPERS.57); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.26 Nam June Paik, *The More, The Better*, 1988, video installation, four-channel video, color, sound, 1003 monitors (6 in., 10 in., 14 in., 20 in., 25 in.); steel, 60.8 x 36 x 36 ft. National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, Gwacheon, South Korea.

Figure 1.27 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("The Language of the Future") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.28 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("The Language of the Future") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.29 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Title") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.30 Nam June Paik, *Butterfly* video still, 1986, single-channel video, 2:03 min. color, sound © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.31 Nam June Paik, *Untitled Photograph or Video Still (Laurie Anderson)*, 1995, photographic print on paper, sheet: 11 x 14 in. image: 10 1/2 x 13 1/2 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.120); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.32 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Cavalcade of Intellectuals") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.33 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("Bowie/Sakamoto Interview") video still, 1988, single-channel video, 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.34 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("Interlocator") video still, 1988, single-channel video, 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.35 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Space Feedback") video still, 1984, single-channel video, 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.36 Nam June Paik, First Script for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, 1983, p. 7, paper with typed text, 11 x 8 in., 9 pages, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (Box 8, Folder 7); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.37 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* ("Mudang") video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.38 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* ("Mudang") video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.39 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("TV Shrine") video still, 1988, single-channel video. 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.40 Nam June Paik, *Gut for Joseph Beuys* video still, 1990, Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.41 Nam June Paik, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* ("Cage/Beuys") video still, 1984, single-channel video. 30 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.42 Nam June Paik, Storyboard for *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell*, 1983, from Nam June Paik, *Art for 25 Million People: Bon Jour, Monsieur Orwell*, (Berlin: Daadgalerie, 1984), Appendix 5, n.p.

Figure 1.43 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("Transpacific Duet") video still, 1988, single-channel video. 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.44 Nam June Paik, *Bye Bye Kipling* ("Video Ball") video still, 1986, live version, 87:40 min. color, sound. Nam June Paik Art Center Video Archives. © Nam June Paik Estate © 1986 Educational Broadcasting Corporation.

Figure 1.45 Nam June Paik, *Wrap Around the World* ("The More, The Better") video still, 1988, single-channel video. 47 min. color, sound. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive; Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate. © Nam June Paik Estate © Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).

Figure 1.46 Nam June Paik, *SAT-ART III video set*, 1988, VHS video cassettes with two-part sleeve (plastic and printed cardstock) in wooden box. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.VID.65A-D); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.47 Nam June Paik, *SAT-ART III video wooden box*, 1988, wood. 4 5/8 x 4 3/4 x 8 3/8 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.VIDC.25); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.48 Nam June Paik, *SAT-ART III video box bandana*, 1988, cotton fabric, 19 1/4 x 20 1/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.VIDC.26); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.49 Nam June Paik, *Nomad Suitcase*, 2004, single-channel video installation with two 20 in. monitors and acrylic paint on suitcase, 42 1/2 × 42 1/2 × 20 in. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge. Gift of the Hakuta Family.

Figure 1.50 Nam June Paik (?), *Untitled drawing*, undated, oil stick on paper, 22 1/4 x 30 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.458); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.51 Nam June Paik (?), *Untitled drawing*, undated, oil stick on paper, 22 1/4 x 30 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.467); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 1.52 Nam June Paik and Allen Ginsberg (?), *Paper with Orwell Inscription*, undated, print on paper, 22 1/4 x 30 1/4 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik Archive (NJP.1.GA.57); Gift of the Nam June Paik Estate.

Figure 2.1 Masaki Fujihata, *Beyond Pages*, 1995–97, specifically designed room, custom-made table (digitalizer tablet) and chair, table lamp, data projector x 2, Macintosh 7600 x 1 with additional graphics card, one powered speaker. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.2 Masaki Fujihata, *Masaki Fujihata*, 2016, cardboard box, three-hole binding book, 9 x 9 in. Image courtesy the artist

Beyond Pages, 1995–1997
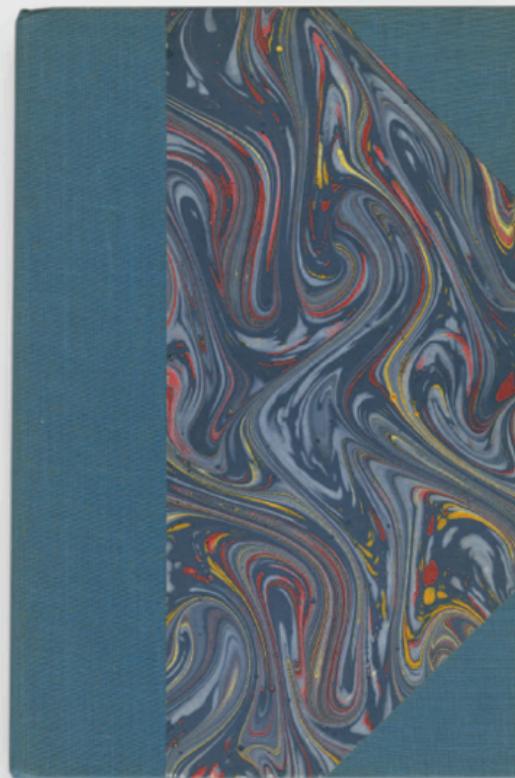
Modèle 3D simplifié de l'installation. Quand on touche l'écran, une vidéo du livre se met en lecture. La vidéo s'arrête sur une certaine image. En touchant à nouveau l'écran, la vidéo repart.

作品の単純化された3Dモデルが表示されます。机の上の本は、画面をタップすると開きます。本の動画は適宜止まります。タップすると続きを再生します。

Simplified model of the installation in 3D. Once you tap the screen, the movie of the book starts to play. The movie stops at a certain frame. When you tap again, the movie continues to play.

Figure 2.3 Masaki Fujihata, *Beyond Pages* AR marker, from Masaki Fujihata, *Masaki Fujihata* (Paris: éditions Anarchive, 2016), n.p. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.4 Masaki Fujihata, *Beyond Pages* AR video, from Masaki Fujihata, *Masaki Fujihata* (Paris: éditions Anarchive, 2016), n.p. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.5 Masaki Fujihata, *Be Here*, 2018, site-specific public project, Hong Kong. Photo Credit: Kyungso Min.

Figure 2.6 Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky*, 1987–91, mixed media installation / hand-printed books and scrolls printed from blocks inscribed with "false" Chinese characters. Installation view at Elvehjem Museum of Art, Madison, 1991. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.7 Xu Bing, *Book from the Ground*–Interactive Software Installation, 2003–. Installation view at Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2007. Image courtesy the artist.


Figure 2.8 Screenshots of Xu Bing, *Book from the Ground*–Interactive Software, 2006–. Image courtesy the artist.

**Figure 2.9** Cover of Xu Bing, *Book from the Ground: From Point to Point*, 2003–12. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.10 Cover of Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Pacific Limn*, 2013. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.11 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Pacific Limn*, 2013. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.12 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Pacific Limn* (trailer) video still, 2013, video, 1:10 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.13 Screenshot of Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries Website, "YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES / SET IN MONACO" Page. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.14 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Miss DMZ* video still*,* color, sound, text, 11:28 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.15 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Traveling to Utopia: With a Brief History of the Technology* (French/English version) video still, color, sound, text, 3:49 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.16 Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *Traveling to Utopia: With a Brief History of the Technology* (English/Korean version) video still, color, sound, text, 3:50 min. Image courtesy the artist.
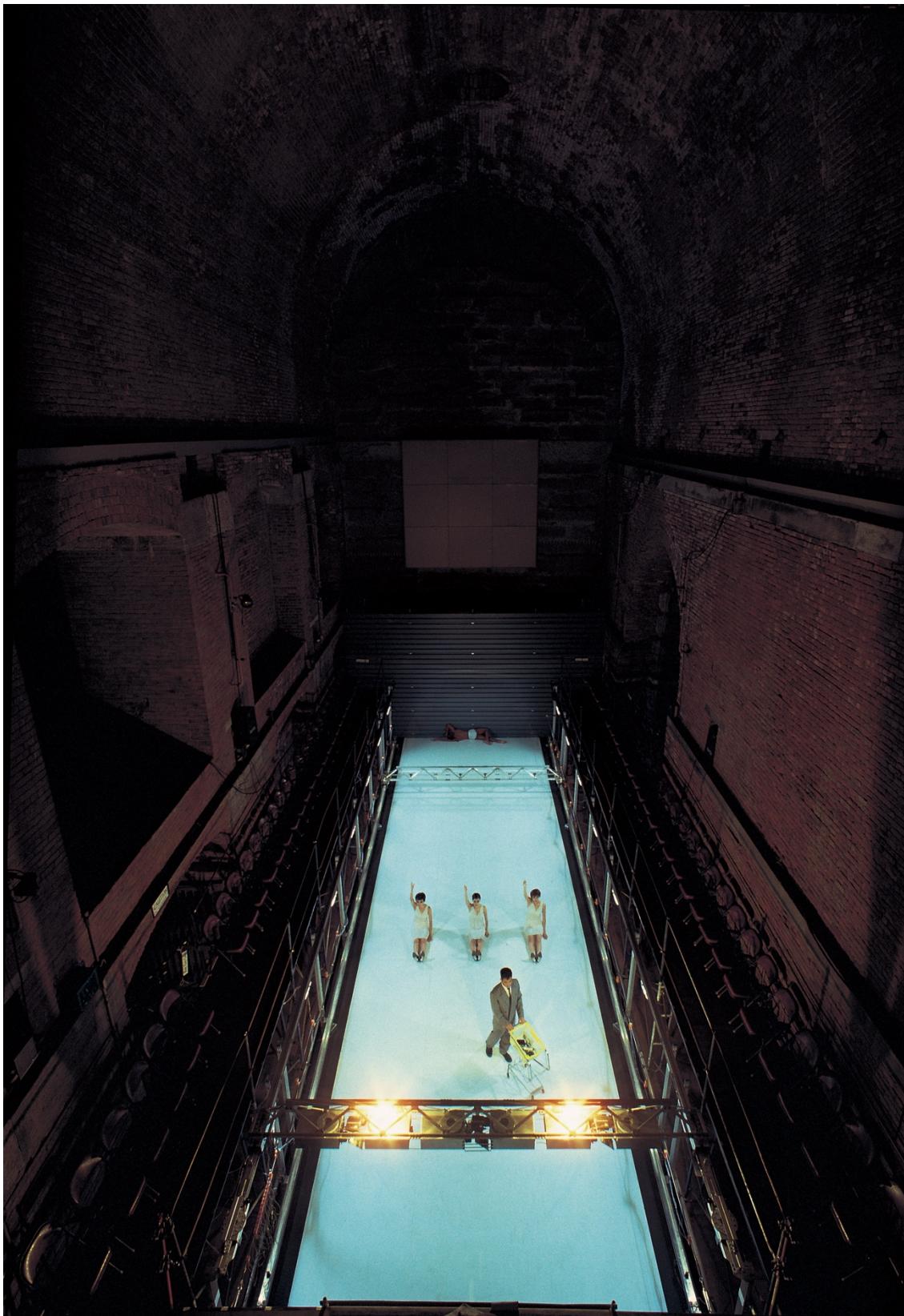
Figure 3.1 Dumb Type, *pH*, 1990. Performance at the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, New York. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Shiro Takatani.
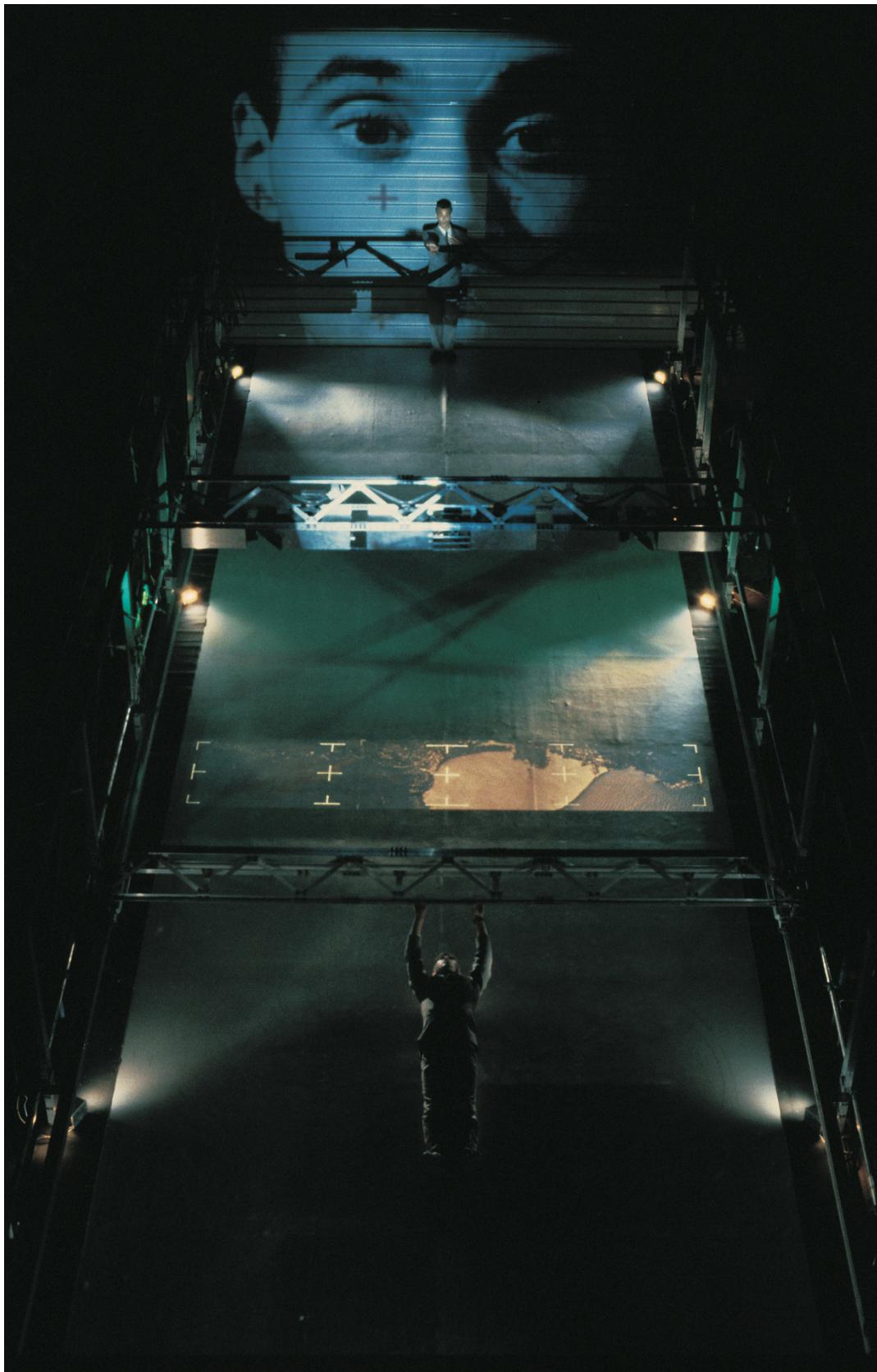
Figure 3.2 Dumb Type, *pH*, 1990. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Shiro Takatani.
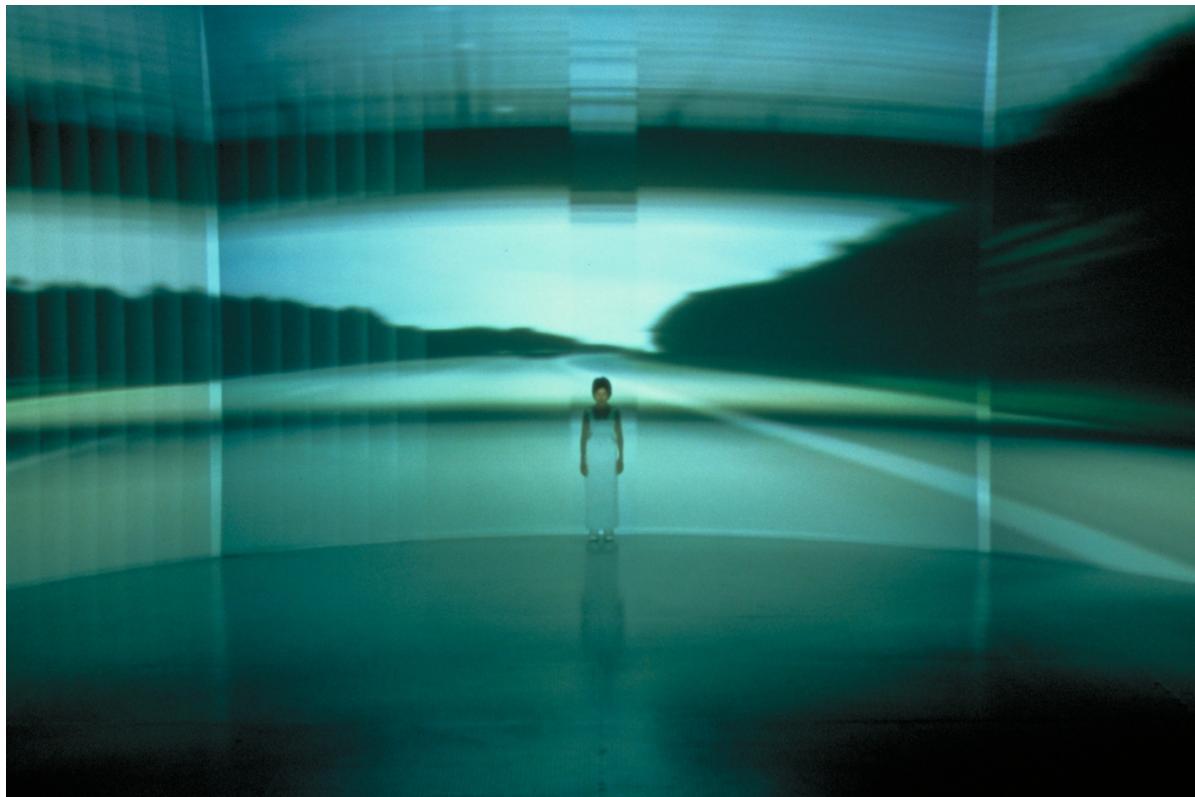
Figure 3.3 Dumb Type, *OR*, 1997. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Emmanuel Valett.
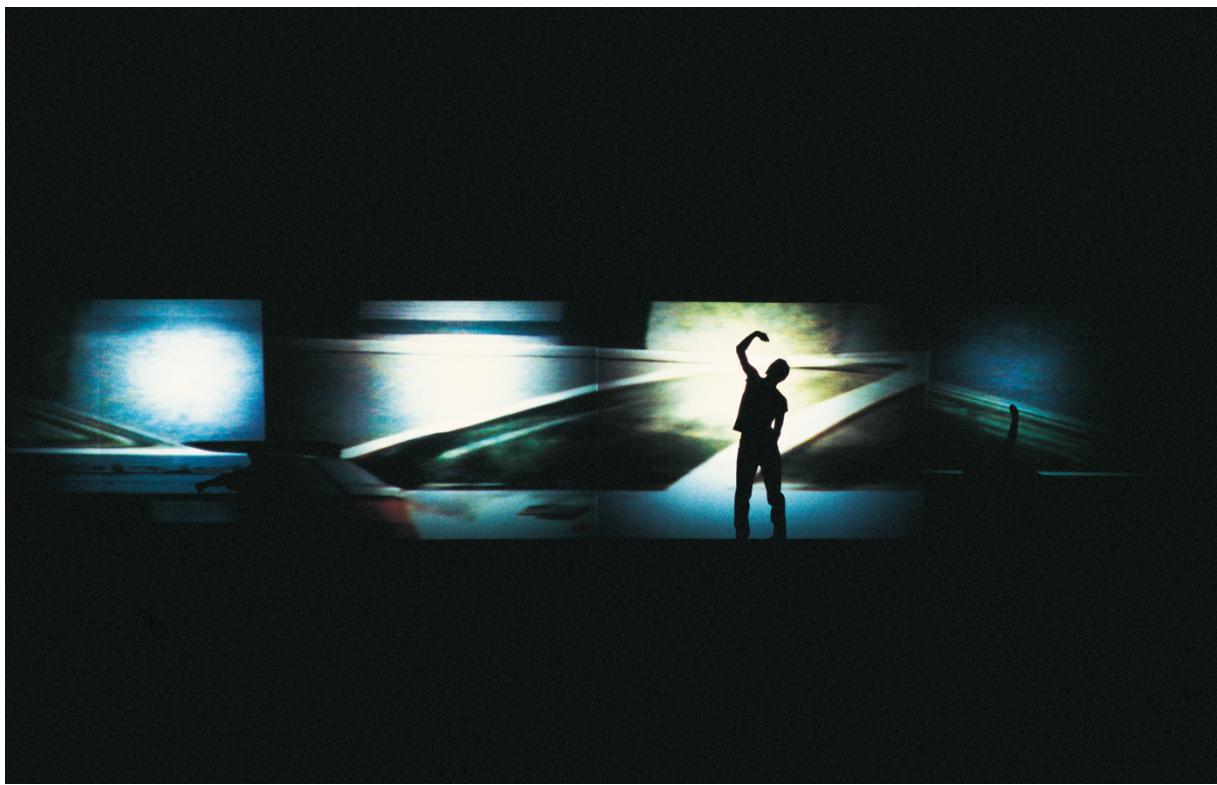
Figure 3.4 Dumb Type, *memorandum*, 1999. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Yoko Takatani.
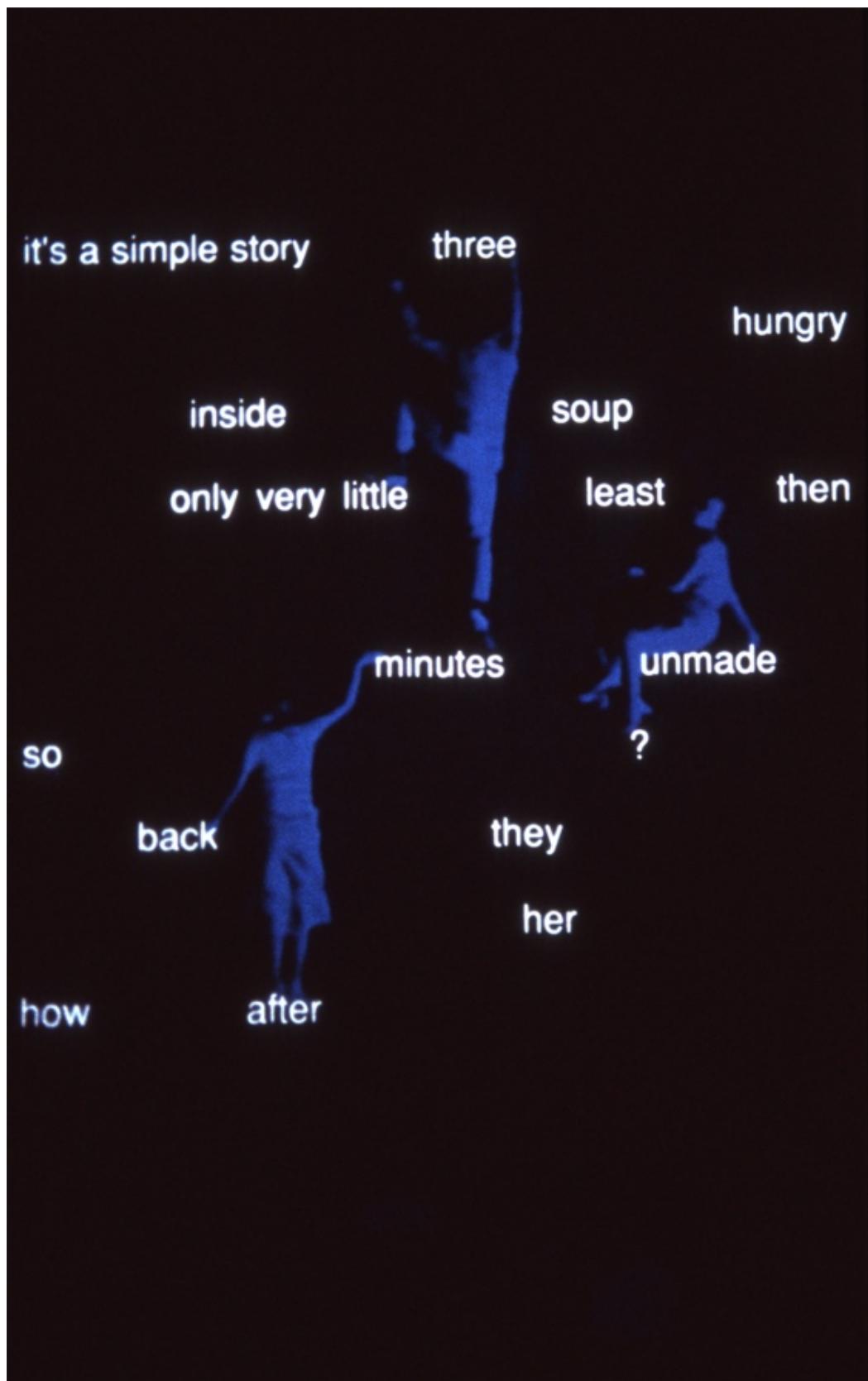
Figure 3.5 Dumb Type, *memorandum*, 1999. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Kazuo Fukunaga.
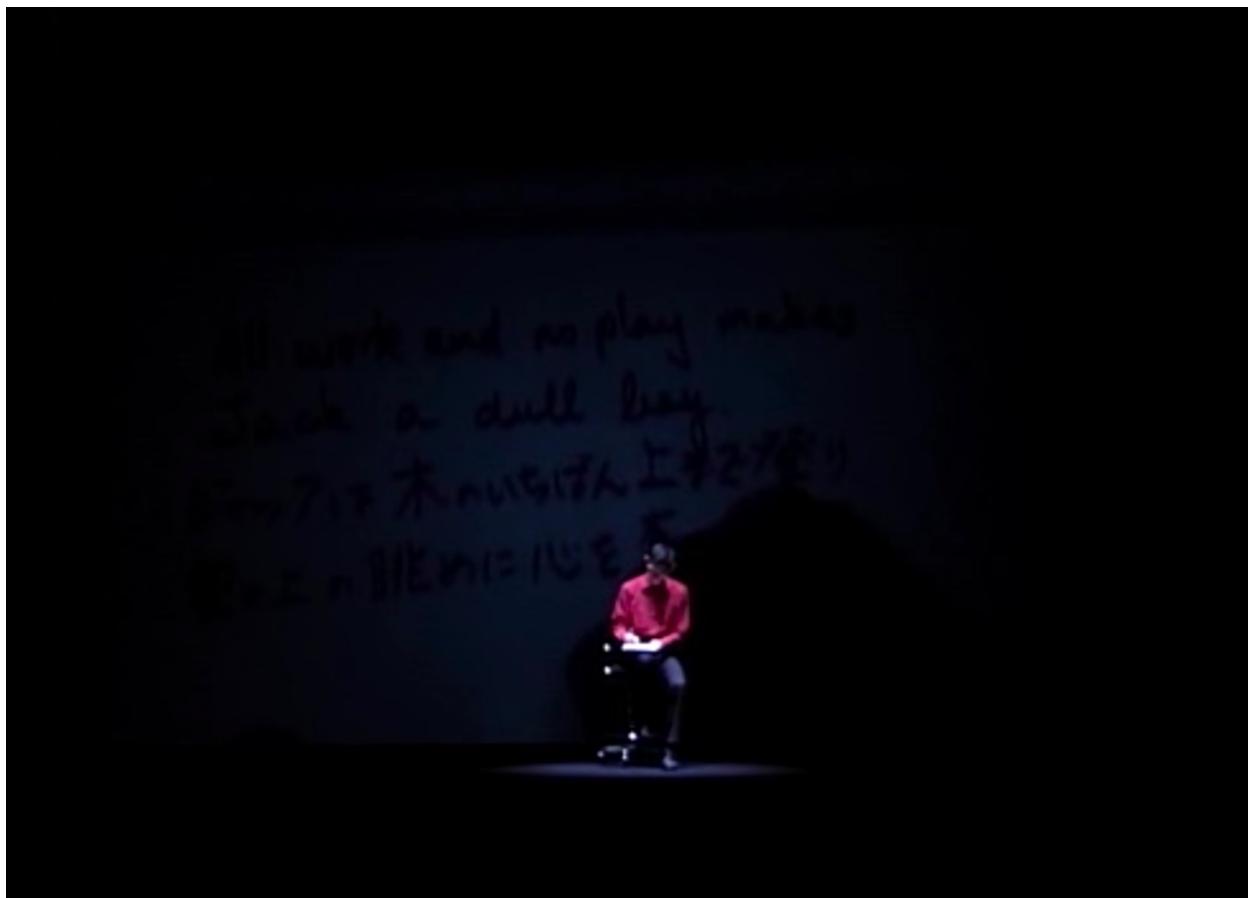
Figure 3.6 Dumb Type, *memorandum* video still, 1999. video, 75 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 3.7 Teiji Furuhashi, *Lovers (Dying Pictures, Loving Pictures)*, 1994, computer controlled five-channel laser disc/sound installation with five projectors, two sound systems, two slide projectors, and slides (color, sound), 32.10 x 32.10 ft. ©ARTLAB, Canon Inc.

Figure 3.8 Dumb Type, *OR* installation, 1997. Installation view at NTT InterCommunication Center, Tokyo, Japan. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Takashi Ohtaka.

Figure 3.9 Dumb Type, *OR* installation, 1997 (2000), second version produced for the "Musiques en Scène 2000" exhibition at the Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art, France. 16.40 x 31.82 x 10.82 ft. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Blaise Adilon.
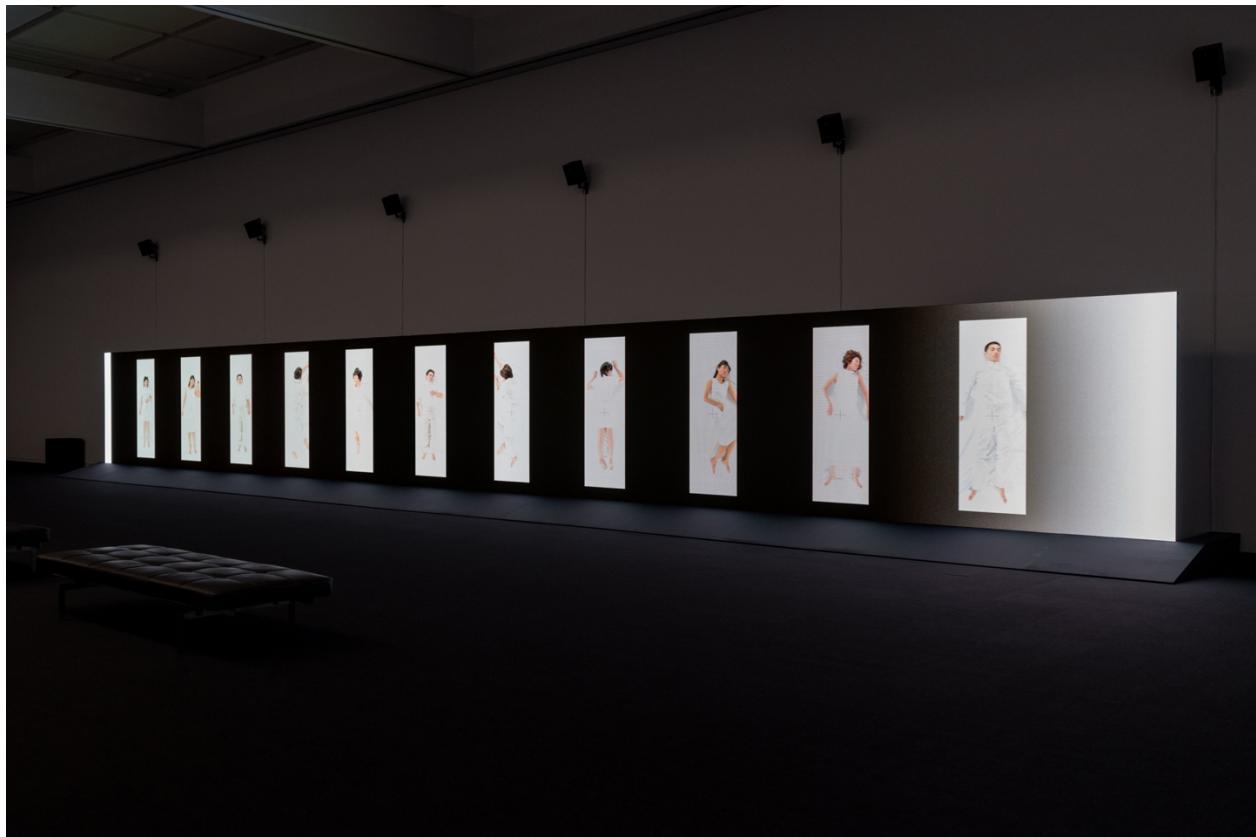
Figure 3.10 Dumb Type, *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE*, 2014, video installation, 4K viewing (self-luminous/super high-definition/large-scale vision), Special Support: SONY PCL Inc. Installation view from the exhibition "Dumb Type | Actions + Reflections" at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Japan, 2019–20. Photo Credit: Nobutada Omote.
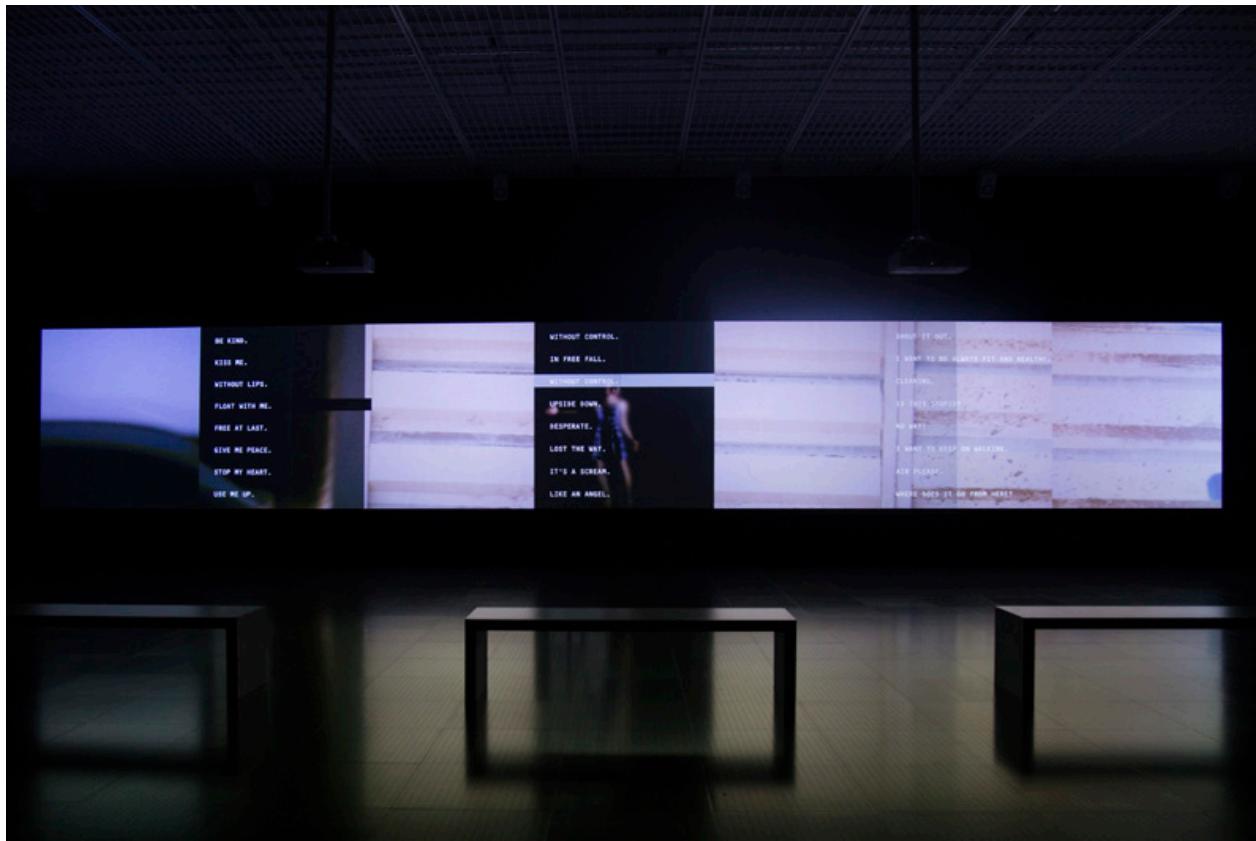
Figure 3.11 Dumb Type, *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE*, 2014, 4K viewing (self-luminous/super high-definition/large-scale vision), Special Support: SONY PCL Inc. Installation view from the exhibition "Dumb Type | Actions + Reflections" at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, France, 2018. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Jacqueline Trichard.
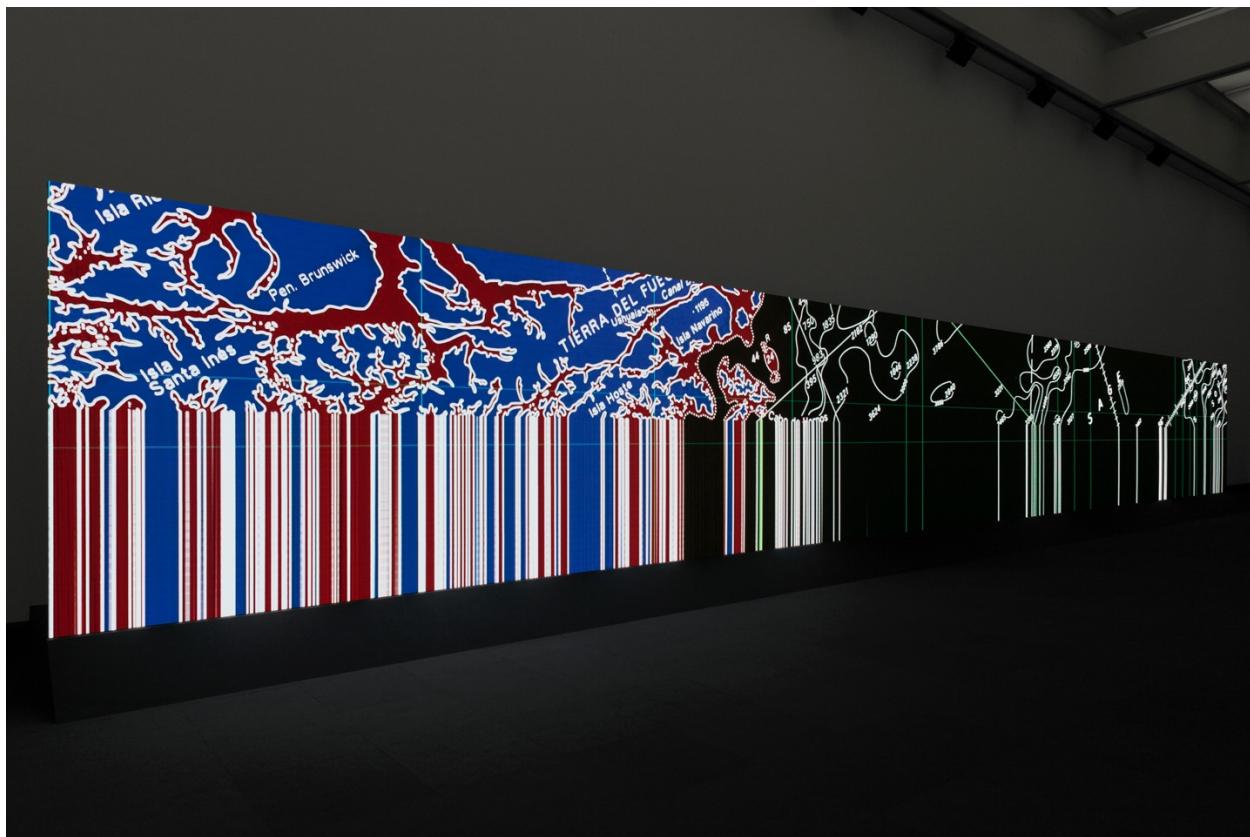
Figure 3.12 Dumb Type, *MEMORANDUM OR VOYAGE*, 2014, video installation, 4K viewing (self-luminous/super high-definition/large-scale vision), Special Support: SONY PCL Inc. Installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Japan, 2014–15. Image courtesy the artist. Photo Credit: Shizune Shiigi.

Figure 3.13 Dumb Type, *Trace-16*, 2019, stainless-steel composite material. Installation view (left) from the exhibition "Dumb Type | Actions + Reflections" at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Japan, 2019–20. Photo Credit: Nobutada Omote.

Figure 3.14 Daito Manabe, *Copy My Facial Expression into My Friends' - Test 0* video still, 2008, video, 44 sec. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 3.15 Daito Manabe, *Electric Stimulus to Body + Myoelectric Sensor Test 1 (Daito Manabe + Masaki Teruoka)* video still, 2010, video, 3:56 min. Image courtesy the artist.
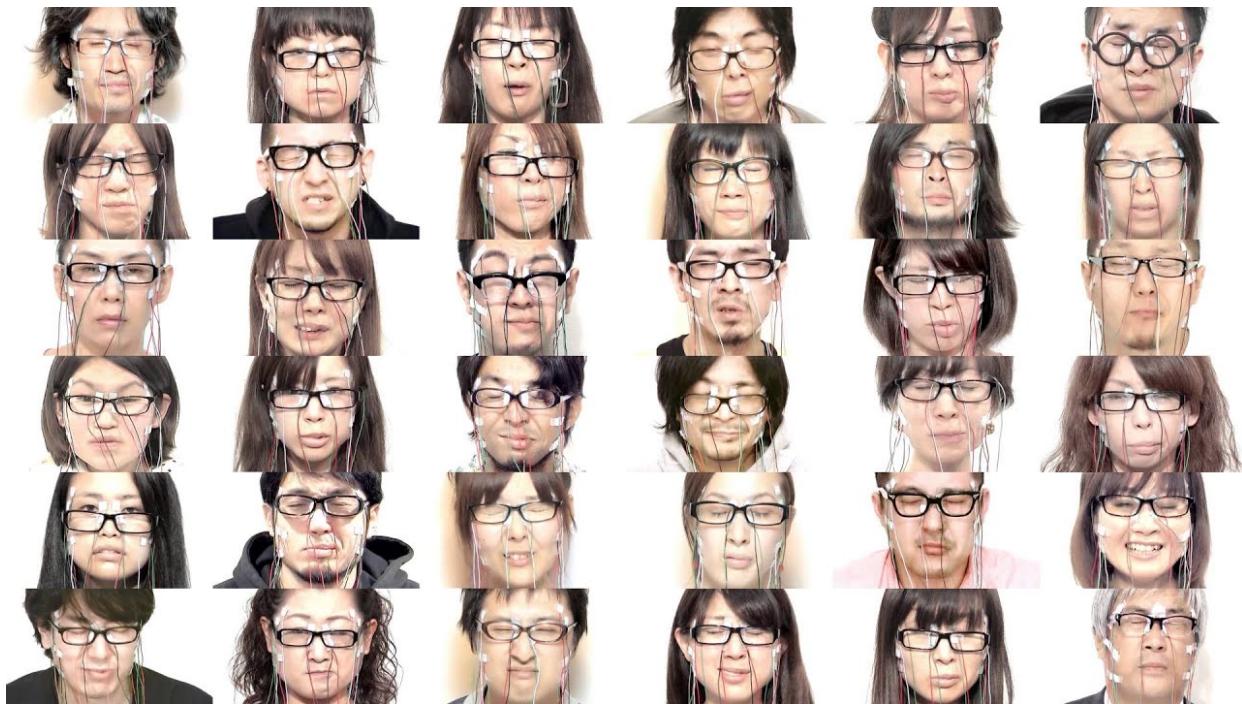
Figure 3.16 Daito Manabe, *Face Visualizer, Instrument, and Copy*, 2009, single-channel video, 11 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 3.17 Elevenplay x Rhizomatiks Research, *iPad Scene [dot.]*, 2011. Performance at Laforet Museum Harajuku, Tokyo, Japan. Image courtesy the artist.
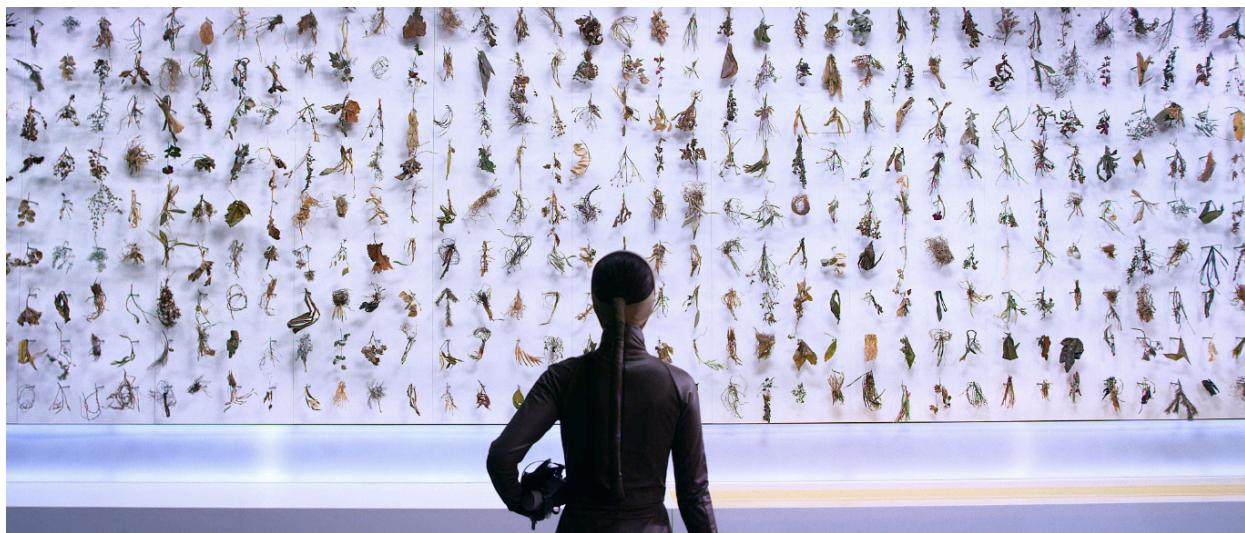
Figure 4.1 Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho, *El Fin del Mundo*, 2012, two-channel HD film. 13:30 min. Image courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.2 Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho, *The Ways of Folding Space & Flying*, 2015, seven-channel HD video and sound installation, 10:30 min. Image courtesy the artist.

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