

**THE MAN WITH
THE VIDEO CAMERA**

an experimental
video installation

by

aras ozgun

Acknowledgements

"The Man With The Video Camera" was first produced in 1998 at METU-GISAM in Ankara, and exhibited at Ankara Contemporary Arts Center during ANYtime Conference jointly organized by Architectures of New York (ANY) and Architects Association of Ankara. I developed and refined the installation furthermore after I moved to New York the same year, and exhibited a new version of it at "Mixed Messages" multimedia show at The New School Media Studies Department, where it received "Best of The Show" prize and "Jury Grand Award". The same version of the installation was also exhibited at National Arts Club in New York following the interest it generated. A few years later, I edited another version of the installation for a special screening at Austrian Cultural Forum in New York, as a part of a collaborative event with Arno Bohler and Sussanne Granzer (GRENZ-film) in May 2001. Although some minor changes and additions were made in each version, all these past versions of the installation were made to be presented from four VHS players on four different screens synchronously, but with no technical synchronization further than manually starting the tapes at the same moment. The last and final version of the installation is made in 2004 for DVD presentation. The final version of the installation requires 4 DVD player and 4 different size (without any specific size) monitors or projectors, and a quiet environment for the exhibition..

This concept paper was also written during the initial production of the installation in 1998, and had minor revisions during production of the second version same year. It provides the conceptual framework and basic ideas of the work, production notes and images and excerpts from the text. Today, reading it again, video does not feel "new" to me anymore, and I'm seeing a few other things that I would expand or formulate in a different way now. But still, the same artistic and intellectual direction continues to shape my works today. Then, I'm thinking that, the "newness" of the video has to be reinvented and rearticulated again, rather than retouching what I have written at that moment.

Aras Ozgun
March 2004, Williamsburg, New York

idea

video appears as a new technological form which emancipates everyday life from the televisual world it is trapped into --as a new kind of memory directed towards the time being in, as a new eye which captures the events that we live in without being aware of them. it transforms the primary conditions of existence; time/space, movement/memory. "the man w/ the video camera" is an experiment in video apparatus which tries to cultivate this new technological form and this new form of being.



I have an image

I have a dream



that

I have a face

a new face



I have an eye

a new eye
a blinded eye
an electronic one

I open my eyes and see

faces in ruins

eyes blinded



derivation

the name "the man w/ the video camera" is derived from the famous work of russian constructivist filmmaker dziga vertov's "the man with the movie camera". vertov conceptualized cinematographic apparatus as a new form which not only challenges the perception of the world but reorganizes it by reestablishing the images of it throughout cinematic processes. for vertov cinema appeared as a medium to intervene the mechanical productive forces of the early twentieth century and to be a part of this mechanical mode of production. in this sense, vertov issued the concept of "camera-eye" (kino-glatz) which referred to the filming of everyday images (life caught unawares/ life as itself/ life facts) and reorganizing them through cinematographic editing processes and constructing a new and cinematographic reality (film-facts).

this was clearly a political task; to understand the mechanical modern world which is incomprehensible for the naked human body, to be a part of the machinery which changes the world, to gain a sight without distance and limits, to intervene the reality itself by altering its images, and to transform the everyday life by being a part of it's own productive forces -to liberate the reality, the images and the self.

video is haunted by the ghost of dziga vertov. in a world of electronic images constructed by televisual apparatus, precisely at the moment when our personal/collective memory is annihilated by the regime of permanent present time organised through televisual images, video enables us to remember what happens in everyday life. this is not a form of permanent memory, such as the photographic and cinematographic images once meant to be. it is an ephemeral one; one remembers what happens just at the time when the event takes place, realizes what happens at that very moment and then forgets it. video is a new form of memory directed towards everyday life. once we possess the images of the moment -sequences out of an accelerated flow of time, we slow down the images and see how things move so fast, what really happens, and catch the cracks between the blocks of time and space... amazing, breathtaking... once such a personal memory is possessed through electronic images, video enables us to re-organize it and construct a new reality from the traces/proofs/ruins of another. video produces a new form of time and space on the traces of everyday life. just like somebody else has done before.

...i am camera-eye, i am a mechanical eye, i, a machine, show you the world as only i can see it

VERTOVIANA

make an image of an image

make an image of making an image

make an image of time

make an image of space

make an image of movement

make an image which has already been seen

make an image that looks good enough

make an image which is really good

make an image which looks like real

make an image which is only an image

make an image which is not seen

make an image which has no point of view

make an image which is blinded

make an image just like somebody else has done before

make an image like an accident

make an image of yourself



video space

space is something in which the movement occurs. the video space is defined by the movement of electronic images and sounds. four television monitors placed on the floor defines a square of images and sounds. video surrounding the human body. this can be taken as a strategy to break the traditional linearity of facing with images, a linearity which is inherited from the ancient cinematographic apparatus to the televisual one. the linear/uni-directional event of being exposed to the images is replaced by the spatiality of the video. body of the spectator will be able to move with the bodies/blocks of images and sounds in the fragmented video space.

fragments and intervals

the absence of totality emancipates images and things. the man w/ the video camera" is a fragmented construction of images and sounds in the video-space. fragmented as life itself. fragmented and unbounded as human memory and imagination. "visibly shattered by the accident happening everyday, forever trying to collect the ruins left after yesterday's crash". these fragmented blocks of images and sounds are not separate and distant, these "things" are connected by the intervals in between. organization of emptiness. making clear passages in between things and events. "the interval is no longer that which separates a reaction from the action experienced, which measures the incommensurability and unforeseeability of the reaction, but on the contrary, that which -an action being given in a point of the universe - will find the appropriate reaction in some other point, however distant it is ... theory of interval is that it no longer marks a gap which is carved out, a distancing between two consecutive images but, on the contrary, a correlation of two images which are distant (and incommensurable from the point of our human perception)." -Gilles Deleuze

protect me from what I see...

socialplastik plastiksocial

one looks proud

one dances naked

one is cold

one hates

one thinks

one rules

one is strong

one is mean

one is quiet

one is watching

one is stupid

one is ugly

one is bold

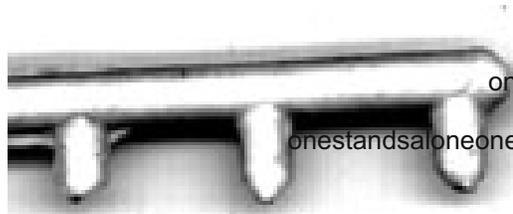
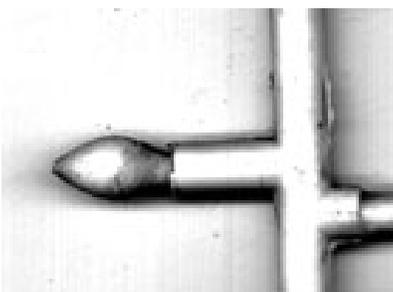
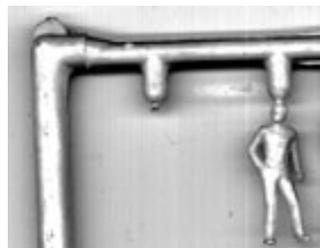
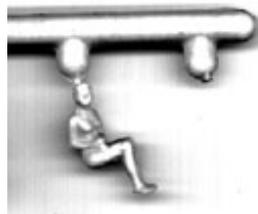
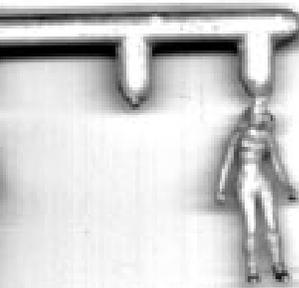
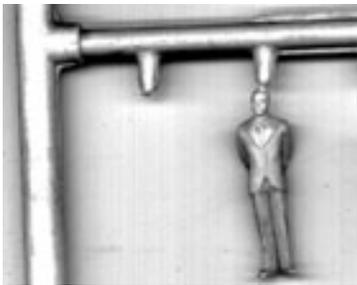
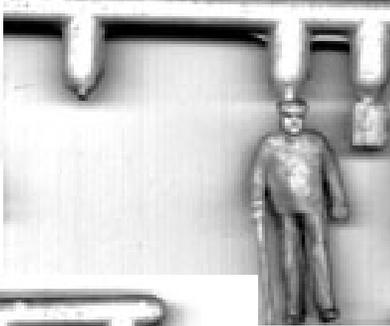
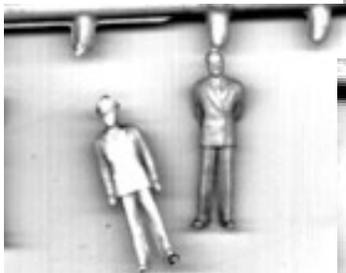
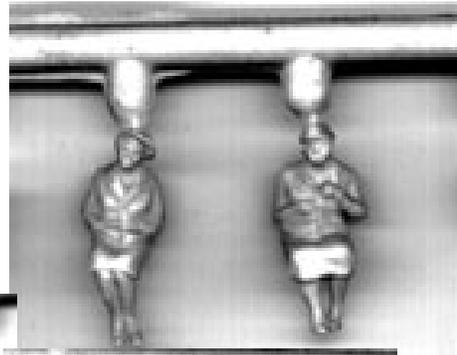
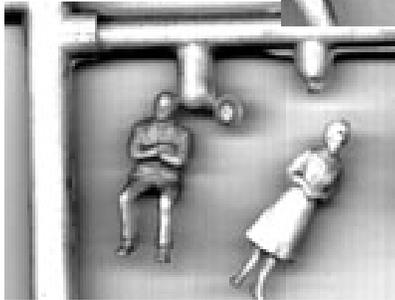
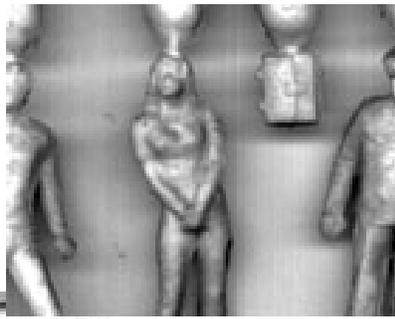
one is white one is black one is gray

one is crying one is suffering one is dying

one is strange one is stranger one is strangest

one stands alone one stands apart one stands still one falls down

one is absent one is missing one is lost





are you still playing with the images? do you think images have got something to do with the reality? can we see what is really happening if we slow down the images and watch them again and again in slow-mo? do you know time is a function of the movement? do you think time will stop if we stand still and don't move? is it true that i won't have to watch my back if i move fast enough? shall i really become a star if I move at the speed of light? do you know that memory is a function of forgetting? could we remember anything if we should forget nothing? should we remember anything if everything should happen at the same moment? do you like the president? does he like you as well? is it true what i see on the TV? do you watch the news every evening to see if they talk about you? didn't we come to the end of the world yet? do you think we will survive? aren't you still laughing yet? are you crying? nothing?...nothing...

