

I Don't Pay Your Price - Queer Feminist Interventions with the Video Camera

curated by Kat Lawinia Gorska

an exhibition by IMAI—Inter Media Art Institute in Düsseldorf at Lore Deutz in Cologne,

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I Don't Pay Your Price. An Introduction

Kat Lawinia Gorska

I.

I Don't Pay Your Price is dedicated to feminist interventions in video art from the 1980s and 1990s. The exhibition is based on a research project involving a diversity-sensitive approach to cataloguing the video holdings in the IMAI archive, which was carried out between 2023 and 2024.¹ Video cassettes from the estate of the former Cologne video art distributor 235 Media, which had long been neglected, were viewed, catalogued, and digitized over a period of two years. The research project aimed to critically examine the history and composition of the IMAI archive. The focus of the project was closely linked to the problem at the heart of the video art canon: Which artistic positions are visible, which are less visible, and which are not visible at all? We tried to pay special attention to marginalized social groups and overlooked themes, but also neglected video formats. We hope that this focus will lead to reparative interventions in the archive and a more diverse reconfiguration of the collection. In this way, the project itself serves as an intervention. The exhibition *I Don't Pay Your Price* presents a selection of the catalogued works and is to be regarded as part of this intervention in the archive.

II.

Video art emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the field of film, which had developed much earlier, the patriarchal stereotype that women and technology belonged to two incompatible spheres had long prevailed. As a technical medium, film was dominated by men: men directed films and operated the cameras, led film festivals, constituted the majority of film critics and, last but not least, it was largely men that established the film archives and collections that exist today. While

¹ The research project in question is: *Vom Rauschen im Archiv: Ein Projekt zur diversitätssensiblen Erschließung der Videobestände des IMAI-Archivs* (About the Noise in the Archives: A diversity-sensitive approach to cataloguing the video holdings in the IMAI archive), funded by the city of Düsseldorf and the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

this is not to say that there were no women working in this domain, women had a far greater influence in the field of video. This is often explained by the fact that this area had not yet been coopted by patriarchal structures and was therefore open to all equally as a kind of tabula rasa.² Video was also not yet established as an art form. At the time, video art was not a field that was financially or artistically lucrative. It was comparatively easy to get involved. Thanks in no small part to the fact that the emergence of the medium coincided with changes in social structures and second-wave feminism, the proportion of women working in video art was actually significantly higher than in film. In the Danish context, the artist Ane Mette Ruge even notes in retrospect that women dominated in this field: “Interestingly, the development of video art in Denmark at that time, for a large part seemed to be in the hands of female artists.”³ Ulrike Zimmermann’s study on active video distributors in West Germany in the 1980s showed that half of the film funding in the video sector in Hamburg went to women.⁴ Video art was one of the first artistic genres in which feminism and the pursuit of gender equality was addressed from the very beginning.⁵ When examining the contexts of the individual works in the course of preparing this exhibition, it also became apparent that some of them have clear queer traits. It is therefore all the more astonishing that the distinctly queer feminist history of video art production is hardly reflected in the programs of Western European video distributors or in the institutional video collections of the time. This is something to think about and is one of the reasons why this video art exhibition focuses on feminist interventions.

III.

Until recently, the works on display in *I Don't Pay Your Price* lay dormant in the estate of Cologne-based video distributor 235, which is now held by the IMAI Foundation. Some of the works are being shown again for the first time in almost forty years. Most of them were never actually distributed by 235; they were often sent to the distributor as unsolicited demo tapes. For reasons that are no longer clear today, they ended up in storage, and most of them were eventually forgotten. Video art distributors such as 235 were committed to the establishment of video art, providing it with a space and an audience. They were the ones who disseminated the works, by putting together programs that they offered to museums or festivals, for example. In this way, they influenced the formation of the video art canon. Being represented by a distributor was of existential importance for video artists. There is no definitive answer today to the question of why many of the exciting

2 See Ulrike Rosenbach in conversation with Wulf Herzogenrath, in *Frauen Video Katalog*, ed. Karin Bruns and Claudia Richarz (Hamburg, 1990), pp. 352–387, here p. 366.

3 Email from the artist to Kat Lawinia Gorska on June 29, 2024.

4 See Ulrike Zimmermann, *Videovertrieb in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Materialien* (Hamburg, 1988).

5 See Kat Lawinia Gorska, “Tigersprünge aus dem Videokunstarchiv: Potenziale der Vergänglichkeit von Videobändern,” *Frauen und Film* 72 (2024), pp. 113–122, here p. 114.

and fascinating works in the exhibition were not distributed by 235. The Western patriarchal social structures that also prevailed in the art scene certainly played a major role. With this project, we hope to make the history of video art more equal and diverse.

IV.

There are many reasons to focus on feminist interventions in video art and therefore to attempt to subvert the Western video art canon. We feel it is important to highlight the clear gender imbalance in video collections and in the history of video art. We also want to give more visibility to the exhibited works. And last but not least, we want to showcase the broad range of interventions with the video camera. They express the ways in which the video artists felt at odds with their own social and artistic context. But these artists took their critique even further: they reflected on their own social situations in order to create better living conditions for everyone. They drew on the feminist critique of science, which emphasized that technology is not neutral. Video technology was by no means a tabula rasa, as is often claimed. Due to the high initial costs, this new technology was first tested in well-funded sectors, such as the military or the police.⁶ And many video artists were conscious of this: “We were aware that we were working with surveillance technology and so it was important to us to use it against the grain,” explains filmmaker and video artist Ulrike Zimmermann.⁷ In Claudia Richarz’s words, the feminist appropriation of the video camera can be seen as an “occupation.”⁸ It was about wresting the camera away from these warmongering structures and appropriating it for queer and feminist purposes. A clear message: *I Don’t Pay Your Price!*

⁶ See Friedrich Kittler, *Optical Media: Berlin Lectures 1999* (Cambridge/Malden, 2002), p. 221f.

⁷ Excerpt from an unpublished interview with Ulrike Zimmermann conducted by Kat Lawinia Gorska in July 2024.

⁸ Karin Bruns and Claudia Richarz, “Pinsel, Pixel, Rosenduft: Anmerkungen zu Videoproduktion und elektronischer Kunst von Frauen,” in *Feministische Streifzüge durch’s Punkte-Universum: Medienkunst von Frauen*, ed. Heidi Hutschenreuter and Claudia Schurian (Essen, 1993), pp. 37–56, here p. 55.

Information on the artists and their works

Zorah Mari Bauer & Viola Kiefner, *Black Forest—Blue Danube*, 1989–1990, 16 min.

These two artists come from very different regions of the German-speaking world. One grew up in southwest Germany, the other in Upper Austria. They met in the far north, in Hamburg. Sorely missing the sun and the south, they came up with the idea of a video work that critically and ironically examines the differences, similarities, and clichés of their respective origins. On a journey along the Danube, the artists made video and sound recordings, learned how to yodel and how to wear traditional costumes correctly. The result is the video alphabet *Black Forest—Blue Danube*, a loose collection of fragments of a bygone world. In terms of formal execution, the video is full of contrasts. Historical photographs meet staged scenes, Viola Kiefner's academic research on monumental architecture, and a video game. The accompanying soundtrack of experimental samples was composed by Zorah Mari Bauer.

Zorah Mari Bauer (b. 1957 in Zell am See, lives in Berlin) is a theorist, musician, and media producer. Bauer studied German studies, communication, and media in Graz and Hamburg. Her work straddles art, information design, media theory, and artistic research. She has taught at various universities and was an interim professor in the Department of Information Design at the University of Duisburg-Essen from 2001 to 2003.

Viola Kiefner (b. 1959 in Stuttgart, lives in Hamburg) studied stage design, fine arts, art history, and theater studies in Stuttgart, Hamburg, and London. Her multimedia installations explore relationships between people, architecture, and history. She has taught at universities in Hamburg, Rostock, and Kiel. Kiefner also works as a curator at the Westwerk artists' center in Hamburg.

This work is a unique collaboration between Zorah Mari Bauer and Viola Kiefner.

Lynda Benglis, *Female Sensibility*, 1973, 13 min.

Known primarily as a sculptor today, Lynda Benglis explored the medium of video intensively in the 1970s. In *Female Sensibility*, she and the artist Marilyn Lenkowsky can be seen sensually embracing, kissing, and caressing each other. The images are juxtaposed with a collage of excerpts

of misogynistic statements that the artist has edited together from radio broadcasts and country ballads. Fully focused on themselves yet simultaneously highly aware of the camera, the two artists seem to ignore these hurtful statements. The images could be interpreted as a visual message: we can imagine and live out a different world. *Female Sensibility* is an artistic reckoning with the heterosexual, patriarchal world that includes the viewer.

The oeuvre of **Lynda Benglis** (b. 1941 in Lake Charles, lives in New York City) includes sculptures, objects, photography, and video art. Materials such as wax, polyurethane, latex, metal, glass, and video serve as extensions of the artist's own body. In the 1970s, she worked intensively with video, using the medium to reflect on subjects such as the gender stereotypes that she encountered in everyday life. In New York, her works can be found in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.

Johanne Charlebois & Harold Vasselin, *Blockhaus*, 1987, 15 min.

A concrete bunker from the Second World War on the Normandy coast: five female dancers explore its interior and exterior architecture, while the electronic sounds of Jean-Jacques Palix make it clear that we are in the 1980s. Forty years have passed since the end of the Second World War. These concrete blocks must have witnessed and experienced a great deal. The dancers put their ears to the wall and listen. Then they grapple with the concrete, seeking to appropriate it, to use it differently, to infuse it with other feelings. This is expressed through their sensual dancing and their tender interactions with each other, which contrast with the cruelty of war. All of a sudden, they all raise their clenched left fists in the air, a gesture that makes the message of this video poem clear: solidarity and unity—that's what matters.

Johanne Charlebois (b. 1959 in Verdun, Québec, lives in Brussels) is a dancer, choreographer, dance teacher, and movement educator. In 1984, she and Harold Vasselin founded the dance company and research group Taxidermie in Paris with the aim of working on dance films and videos, among other projects. In 2008, she became an Iyengar yoga instructor specializing in pregnancy support. Since 2015, she has been working with Le Cocon, a midwife-led birthing unit affiliated with the Erasmus Hospital in Brussels.

Harold Vasselin (b. 1955 in Le Havre, lives there) studied engineering and completed his doctorate at the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris. At the same time, he turned to working with

the body as part of the New Dance movement and in theater. He also discovered video and began filming. In Paris, he founded the dance company and research group Taxidermie with Johanne Charlebois in 1984. As a former scientist, he is concerned with questions relating to technoscience and its impact on society.

Yoshiko Chuma, *Pikka Don*, 1982, 21 min.

Pikka Don is a video performance by Yoshiko Chuma. The colloquial Japanese term “Pikka Don” refers to the atomic bombs dropped on Japan by the USA in 1945. These are both onomatopoeic terms: “Pikka” means “bright flash” and “Don” can be translated as “loud bang.” Yoshiko Chuma dances in front of projected drawings by Jeffrey Isaac to music by Christian Marclay. She moves around playfully with birch logs. Suddenly the image turns black and white and the dancer appears disturbed and frightened. She seems to be afraid of an invisible threat. As the video progresses, the reference to the tragic events of 1945 becomes increasingly clear: Chuma’s clothes and the background change from white to red, as if they were soaked in blood. The video ends with the image of a motionless dancer. Her figure is reduced to a shadow. This striking final scene can be read as a statement against the nuclear arms race during the Cold War.

Yoshiko Chuma (b. 1950 in Osaka, lives in New York City) is a conceptual artist and choreographer. She moved from Japan to New York in 1976. Between 1979 and 1983 she worked with film and video. Chuma became one of the leading figures in modern dance in the USA. In 1982, she founded The School of Hard Knocks in New York, a dance company that is still active today and with which she received a Bessie Award in 1984. Since the 1980s, she has constantly produced thought-provoking works that cannot be confined to dance, theater, film, or any other single category.

Ilse Gassinger, *Exposed*, 1989, 8 min.

Three lovers film each other on their excursions, walks, and travels. Whether in the city or in nature, the camera is their constant companion. These are very intimate videos, video postcards, if you will, that are being displayed here. They express the desire to capture the blurred or out-of-focus moments that are insignificant to most other people. What at first glance looks like an amateurish vacation shot should in fact be understood as a statement. The signal image—the image

that marks the opening of the video—is of a woman looking through a pair of binoculars. A woman watching. Disrupting and defying the patriarchal structures of the gaze, Ilse Gassinger sets out in search of her own images that portray a world that is different to the normative mass media of her era.

Ilse Gassinger (b. 1953 in Knittelfeld, lives in Durham, Canada) is a video artist, photographer, and curator. She studied journalism at the University of Vienna, where she also completed her doctorate. Gassinger was closely associated with the Medienwerkstatt Wien (Vienna Media Workshop) in the 1980s. Her video practice is predominantly experimental, but her works also include documentary formats. Thematically, she explores issues relating to normative social standards. She has lived in Canada since the late 1990s, where she was a long-serving curator at Durham Art Gallery. Her video works have been shown in museums around the world, including the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe and the Fukuyama Museum of Art.

Bettina Gruber & Maria Vedder, *Catfish Tango*, 1986, 7 min.

Handmade backdrops and props, an elaborate soundtrack, and a great deal of humor characterize the work of the duo Bettina Gruber and Maria Vedder. *Catfish Tango* is a mysterious video set to the sounds of tango. At first glance, it is difficult to tell where we are. First we see cardboard skyscrapers, then a flame that turns into an active volcano. Suddenly, iridescent, fish-like figures appear, followed by tools floating on a string and a toothbrush with a cocktail umbrella. What does it all mean? By the end of the film, it becomes clear that it is a cat that is toying with the viewer, making them feel unsettled. Bettina Gruber is responsible for the tango soundtrack.

Bettina Gruber (b. 1947 in Minden, lives in Cologne) is a video and photo artist. She studied art at the University of the Arts in Berlin. In 1986 she founded the ephemeral Klaus Peter Schnüttger-Webs Museum in Cologne together with Ulrich Tillmann and Maria Vedder. Gruber is known for her colorful photographs of animals. Her works can be found in international collections, including the Museum Ludwig in Cologne and Tate Modern in London.

Maria Vedder (b. 1948 in Nordhorn, lives in Berlin) studied photography, theater, film and television studies as well as social sciences in Cologne. From 1991 to 2014, Vedder was a professor of media art at Berlin University of the Arts, where she was involved in the founding of the Institute of Time-Based Media and the Art and Media study program. Her work is represented in numerous

collections, including the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein and Tate Liverpool.

Bettina Gruber and Maria Vedder produced video art together as a duo in the 1980s. Together they wrote the *Handbuch der Videopraxis* (Video Praxis Manual, 1982) as well as the publication *Kunst und Video* (Art and Video, 1983). They have worked separately since the end of the 1980s.

Marina Gržinić & Aina Šmid, *Labirint*, 1993, 12 min.

Like many of the duo's works, *Labirint* (Labyrinth) explores the political situation in the former Yugoslavia. Specifically, it focuses on the camps in Ljubljana for those who had fled Bosnia. Places of helplessness, where a handful of people decide the fate of others. This traumatic story is told through modern dance and quotes from documentaries. These in turn are interwoven with references from art history, particularly motifs from the paintings of the surrealist René Magritte (1898–1967). The dancing is characterized by twitching, quivering, almost trembling movements. The time-lapse interventions by Gržinić and Šmid distort the bodies on display, making them seem like marionettes that are automatically doing what is being asked of them. Gender-specific experiences of violence during war and displacement are particularly prominent in this work.

Marina Gržinić (b. 1958 in Rijeka, lives in Ljubljana and Vienna) has a doctorate in philosophy and is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna as well as a member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana. She also works as a freelance art critic and curator, and has published numerous articles and books.

Aina Šmid (b. 1957 in Ljubljana, lives in Ljubljana) is an art historian. She was editor of the Ljubljana-based design magazine *Ambient* and works as a freelance writer.

Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid have been working together since 1982. Together they have realized around forty video art projects, including a 16 mm short film as well as video and media installations. Their internationally exhibited works have received numerous awards.

Mona Hatoum, *So Much I Want to Say*, 1983, 5 min.

The image shows a motionless, female-presenting head with wide open eyes. Two hands hold the person's mouth shut, as if to prevent them from speaking. In the accompanying audio, the sentence "So much I want to say" can be heard over and over again in an endless loop, although the emphasis

changes. The photographs or stills of the head undergo even greater changes, but you can still tell that it is the same head. A horizontal stripe runs across the picture from top to bottom, the images changing each time it passes. Although the pictures themselves are immobile, the constant change gives the impression of action: the person prevented from speaking is trying to free themselves. From time to time you can see their open mouth, which is then closed again by the hands. The video is a statement. Not only are women not listened to, they are literally prevented from speaking. Now it is up to them to find a way to free themselves.

Mona Hatoum (b. 1952 in Beirut, lives in London) is an interdisciplinary artist. She studied art at the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Slade School of Art in London. Since the 1990s, she has increasingly worked with sculpture and installation. Before that, she concentrated on performance works and occasionally video. In her early works, she often reflected on the position of the female-presenting migrant body. Later works focused on the integration of the individual into social structures and the associated power dynamics. Mona Hatoum's work has been exhibited around the world, including at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Beirut Art Center, and documenta in Kassel.

Barbara Konopka (moRgan), *Binary Notes*, 1998, 4 min.

Binary Notes is a homage to the poem "Hymn do maszyny mego ciała" (Hymn to the Machinery of My Body) by the futurist Titus Czyżewski (1880–1945). The video is a free interpretation of this poem. On a visual level, the digital photogram series *Illuminations. Online. Binary Man* (1998), some of the first digitally edited photographs in Poland, takes center stage. The artist exposed the photograms to distorted signals, such as those from a satellite antenna. On a thematic level, the film is about technologically mediated communication and telepresence, which becomes clear in the displayed sentence "I think your brain and mine are compatible." Konopka examines the multiple forms of human existence and also tries to imagine beings from other dimensions. In doing so, she takes up the question, which was highly topical at the time, of whether life always has to be biological.

Viola player and multimedia artist **Barbara Konopka** aka **moRgan** (b. 1968 in Szczecin, lives in Warsaw) oscillates between video, digital art, and sound performance in her work. She studied cinematography at the National Film, Television and Theater School in Łódź and viola at the Fryderyk Chopin Music Academy in Warsaw. Konopka explores questions relating to human identity and the changes brought about by the rapid development of communication technologies.

She is considered a pioneer of cyberfeminism in the Polish art scene. Konopka is a founding member of the band Pentarosa.

Malaria!/Brigitte Bühler & Gudrun Gut & Dieter Hormel, *Your Turn to Run*, 1984, 4 min.

In the three years of their existence, the band Malaria! produced three music videos. *Your Turn to Run* is one of them. The video was shot in Kreuzberg, Berlin at night. A couple of women are passing the time in a car: their typical 1980s clothing and matching make-up are particularly eye-catching. *Your Turn to Run* was shot by Brigitte Bühler, Gudrun Gut, and Dieter Hormel with a Super 8 camera. Brigitte Bühler and Dieter Hormel were also responsible for the music video *Geld* (Money); clips from this were used for *Your Turn to Run*.

The Berlin new wave band **Malaria!** was founded in 1981 by Gudrun Gut and Bettina Köster. It emerged from the group Mania D. Other members were Manon Pepita Duursma, Christine Hahn, and Susanne Kuhnke. Malaria! played internationally in some of the most renowned clubs in New York, Paris, London, and Berlin.

Rabe perplexum, *Danke Deutschland: Ehemalige Schützengraben Parade*, 1985, 25 min.

Danke Deutschland: Ehemalige Schützengraben Parade (Thank You Germany: Former Trench Parade), is a video featuring performances by Rabe perplexum, Wolfgang Hornstein, Kwalsky Rapid, and Geier—some of whom are wearing garish make-up and eccentric clothing. In *Der Säugling* (The Infant), Rabe perplexum explains to a doll what an infant is. In *Die alten Damen* (The Old Ladies), a person wearing a coat the wrong way round contemplates the dangers threatening humanity. The video also documents a series of street actions in Munich, in which Rabe perplexum walks around the Viktualienmarkt with a skeleton, saws up a street sign, or stabs at the people around them in a cemetery with a knife, for example. This is accompanied by superimposed headlines from the *Bild* newspaper and excerpts from speeches on the *Tagesschau* news program; taken out of context and integrated into situations staged by Rabe perplexum, they take on a new, ironic, and mostly humorous meaning. Bavarian folklore plays an important role here.

The oeuvre of **Rabe perplexum** (b. 1956 in Munich, d. 1996 in Munich) oscillates between video, performance, theater, and installation. Rabe was born Manuela Hahn in Munich, but assumed the

pseudonym Rabe perplexum in 1982. From 1982 to 1983, Rabe was part of the artist group Abraxas. From 1985 to 1991, Rabe studied painting and graphic art under Robin Page at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. The artist's performances were characterized by a provocative and sharp humor that took aim at West Germany's conservative postwar society.

Monica Petracci, *Salomé*, 1995, 22 min.

Salomé is a video play. It is based on the stage play of the same name by Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), which was banned in England after its publication in 1851. It tells the biblical story of the Jewish princess Salome, who falls in love with John the Baptist. However, John rejects her love, and so she asks King Herod, who has promised to grant her a request, to have John beheaded. She kisses John's severed head on the mouth and thus takes possession of it. In Monica Petracci's interpretation, it remains unclear whether Salome's love was perhaps reciprocated after all. She relocates the events of the play to contemporary Italy: a swivel chair in a hairdressing salon and "la luna"—the moon, which is feminine in Italian—both enter the scene.

Monica Petracci (b. 1964 in Forlì, lives there) founded the video production company Tecniche Blu together with other women in 1989. Petracci's collaborators include the Masque Teatro ensemble. She has made numerous theater videos, video clips, and documentaries and has been involved in several independent projects as a camerawoman and producer. Her work has been shown at festivals and has won several awards. Petracci now devotes her time to organic farming.

Claudia Richarz, *Endlich eine Prinzessin*, 1985, 2 min.

Endlich eine Prinzessin (Finally a Princess) is a formal hybrid. We see slides that have been filmed by Richarz with a half-inch video camera. The images were captured at locations such as a highway rest stop and a fairground ride at a Hamburg carnival called Hamburger Dom. Richarz recorded the latter at night with a long exposure time. The resulting blur and graininess turn the forms in the image into multifaceted fields of color.

The video tells a love story between two women. We don't learn this at first glance; we have to engage with the audio first, with sounds that can easily be drowned out in this short work. The deserted images evoke the impression of a person we have just missed, someone who, in their haste, has left a smoldering cigarette on the edge of the sink at a rest stop between Hamburg and Berlin.

Susanne Gläß composed the music and played it on her violin.

Claudia Richarz (b. 1955 in Troisdorf, lives in Eckernförde) is an experimental and documentary filmmaker. She studied visual communication at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg under Helke Sander and others. In 1979, Richarz co-founded Bildwechsel—Kultur- und Medienzentrum für Frauen (Image Change—Culture and Media Center for Women). Several of her films have won awards: she received the Grimme-Preis in 2000 for her documentary series *Abnehmen in Essen* (Losing Weight in Essen), and the Audience Prize at the Internationales Frauen Film Fest Dortmund+Köln (Dortmund and Cologne International Women's Film Festival) in 2023 for *Helke Sander: Aufräumen* (Helke Sander: Cleaning House).

Nina Rippel, *Drei Unterwasserstücke mit Cello*, 1985, 6 min.

Drei Unterwasserstücke mit Cello (Three Underwater Pieces with Cello) unfolds in three parts. In each of them, the camera follows a person in dark clothing performing a dance underwater. Set in a swimming pool, everything is bathed in blue. The spectacle is accompanied by the sounds of a cello, although it is not simply background music. Image and sound complement each other and form a holistic performance of dance and music. While the cello plays with sweeping strokes throughout, the visual level is experimental. The camera perspective, the editing technique, and repetitions of the same sequences or their reversal all create a kind of underwater labyrinth: Where is left, right, down, up? Is what we see the surface of the water? Is the dancer diving in or surfacing? The images raise many questions, they are unsettling—and therein lies their power.

Nina Rippel (lives in Hamburg) is an experimental and documentary filmmaker. She studied art education and film at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg. She founded the documentary filmmakers' collective die thede there in 1980. Rippel worked as an art teacher at various high schools and taught media as a lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt am Main and at Leuphana University Lüneburg. In her films, she examines perception and the corporeal dimension of film. Her topics range from filming underwater to the lived experience of people with visual impairments.

Pipilotti Rist, (*Entlastungen*) *Pipilottis Fehler*, 1988, 11 min.

Horizontal stripes, like those that occur when playing a video cassette in preview mode, constantly run across the picture. Over time, these image disturbances intensify to the point where sometimes only blurred colors are visible. These technical errors are both an aesthetic intervention and a metaphor. *(Entlastungen) Pipilottis Fehler* ((Absolutions) Pipilotti's Mistakes) chronicles a failure that does not have negative connotations. A failure that is part of life, that makes it what it is. This is heightened by the visual narrative: a person in a red dress repeatedly falls to the ground, tries to scale a wall, or attempts to save themselves from a swimming pool. With a lot of humor, simple technical tricks, and a playful soundtrack featuring music by Hans Feigenwinter and Les Reines Prochaines, the artist creates an exhilarating work that interprets mistakes as strength.

Pipilotti Rist (b. 1962 in Grabs, lives in Zurich) is a pioneer in the field of spatial video art. She studied commercial art at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and audiovisual communication at the Basel School of Design. From 1988 to 1994 she was a member of the music group Les Reines Prochaines. Her work with video evolved out of advances in technology and her playful research. Rist is known for her immersive installations such as *Worry Will Vanish* (2014). Her work is represented in numerous collections, including the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt am Main and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Ane Mette Ruge, *A Loud Sweet Song*, 1991, 20 min.

A stone path, grasses, treetops, roses, and rubber boots over and over again—only small close-ups can be seen, never a wide shot. The colors are often faded, as if you were looking at bright sunlight. Experimental opera singing dominates the soundtrack. The simple libretto is derived from folkloristic bird song mnemonics—in other words, catchy phrases designed to help humans remember the rhythm and tonal quality of specific birdcalls. The camera fights its way through the thicket. Sometimes it gets so close to the bushes that they touch the lens. It often moves so fast that the images become blurred and the viewer can no longer recognize anything, and can only guess at what they are seeing. At some points, the camera pauses as if it is growing tired. Accompanied by the sounds of a viola da gamba, it observes blades of grass moving in the wind or a leaf lying in the water. The monotony of these sounds increases to reach a trance-like state until a still image of a green leaf flashes on the screen, with sunlight moving over it in fast motion. An unusual but fascinating portrait of nature can be seen and heard in this video opera.

The work of **Ane Mette Ruge** (b. 1955 in Samsø, lives in Copenhagen) is situated in the tension

between genres, media, and language systems. She searches for concepts and aesthetic forms that both integrate and confront video technologies and imbue them with qualities such as poetry, materiality, and presence. In the 1980s and 1990s, Ruge was actively involved in researching and developing video as an art form. Her work has been shown at numerous video festivals around the world. She currently exhibits video and photographic works and realizes commissioned works of art in public spaces, particularly in hospitals, psychiatric institutions, and care homes.

Beate Strecker, *Maxima Grau + Coke = Now*, ca. 1985, clip, 2 min.

A tiled toilet, a person lying on the floor, and new wave sounds. Has something bad happened here? Are we watching a crime scene or an experimental fashion show? The events depicted are mysterious, especially as they have been heavily distorted using a video synthesizer. This video clip was found in the Inter Media Art Institute archive on a video catalogue cassette from the Berlin distributor United Video System. The label on the cassette suggests that Beate Strecker is the author of the work. However, even after extensive research, we were unable to find any trace of the artist. This highlights the pitfalls of archive work. The Inter Media Art Institute is still looking for information about the creation of this video and its author, and would be happy to receive any leads.

Ulrike Zimmermann, *Touristinnen—Über und unter Wasser*, 1986, 22 min.

The backdrop for *Touristinnen—Über und unter Wasser* (Tourists—Above and Under Water) is the port of Hamburg with all its machinery and equipment. A siren and a woman meet each other there. This encounter is characterized by great ambivalence; it is both a harmonious and a tense meeting. They flirt with each other, caress each other, and then, in the next moment, they begin to pursue each other—the tender teasing has suddenly become threateningly serious. The black-and-white images are repeatedly interrupted by poetic underwater shots showing the diving siren. The magical nature of this encounter is intensified by the soundtrack. The distorted original sound, complex sound design, and spoken vocals by Zorah Mari Bauer are interwoven in an experimental way.

Ulrike Zimmermann (b. 1969 in Hamburg, lives in Berlin) is a filmmaker and producer of multimedia online formats. She studied film at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg. In 1989, she founded the production company MMM Film, with which she has produced numerous feature films and documentaries for the international film market. For decades, her work has revolved around the

question of how sexuality will be visualized in the future. Her film *Vulva 3.0.* was presented at the 64th Berlinale in 2014.

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