VIDEO SPACES
The Translation from Video Art to Architectonics

by

KONG Jee Kuan
HD97-2054X

Dissertation submitted to the School of Architecture in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
1998/1999

Abstract
There is no one way to design architecture but the underlying principle remains, that the
design of architecture should address and reflect the time and place from which it arises.
The production of architecture is directly affected by the way we perceive and
experience the visual world. In our time, architecture is no longer based on a set of
closed system that believes in a universal totality. Our present conditions are made up
of fragments from diverse origins. The study of video art gives a focal point on which
we can embark to look at the essence of this contemporary aesthetic experience.

According to many art historians, there is no one single history written for video art till
the present day. This is because for one to understand video, one must take into the
considerations its several origins and its diverging social and aesthetic agendas. The
strength of video lies in its power of multiplicity. Video art perpetual resistance to the
hegemonic institutions of broadcast television and the art institutions leave it situated at
the margins of official aesthetic acceptability. This allows it always holding the status of
an anti-Art, anti-Establishment art. Meanwhile, it is a form of art, which constantly
develops with the advent of technology. Hence, the representations in video art are
always refined by the aid of new sophisticated equipment. Above all, video takes its
presentational forms in dance, theatre and music, which make it a flexible medium of
expression.

Nevertheless, the concern of this research is in how the experience of video spaces
presented in its art form can bring out certain contemporary issues that will ultimately
influence the way we think about architecture. An analysis of the inherent properties of
the medium, shows that editing and multiple-mapping can create a whole new and
diverse spatial-temporality. This space-time experienced in video art relates aptly to the contemporary time, which Ignasi de Solà-Morales describes. Yet, this aesthetic experience cannot exist without the human body, and this body is different from the conventional notion in the history of architecture because the space and time in which it situates itself has evolved.

By acknowledging these elements that make up the contemporary experience can we begin to look at alternative thinking of architectural production. In the last segment of the dissertation, an alternative design strategy is suggested through illustrating the conceptualization and construction of a simple architectural project of a handrail for a day-care centre. It should be emphasized that this is not the only method for design to address and reflect contemporaneity, rather it demonstrates that designing involves the understanding of mutual relations of things in our contemporary situation.

Dissertation Supervisor: Dr Joseph Lim
Title: Associate Professor