

Beyond Frames



**Video art from the
National Gallery
of Australia**

Beyond Frames

Beyond frames brings a major body of video art from the National Gallery of Australia to Logan Art Gallery as part of Sharing the National Collection, spanning more than 5 decades of practice and experimentation with the moving image. Rather than a single, fixed medium, video art has continually shifted in response to new technologies and artistic intentions, absorbing elements of performance, installation, cinema, and digital culture. The works in this exhibition trace that evolution, revealing a form that remains restless, critical and expansive, continuing to redefine what art can be.

Presented in the City of Logan over a 2-year period, *Beyond frames* situates the gallery within a broader national and international context while offering sustained access to a significant strand of contemporary practice rarely encountered at this scale outside major institutions. The exhibition brings together works that are at times rigorous, disarming, poetic and direct, inviting audiences to engage with the moving image not as something fixed or passive, but as a space of ongoing inquiry and encounter.

ARTISTS

Sophie Calle +
Gregory Shephard

Ellen José +
Marshall White

William Kentridge

Tracey Moffatt +
Gary Hillberg

Bruce Nauman

Richard Serra

Bill Viola

William Wegman

+ Local Artists

VIDEO ART: A HISTORY IN FORM



Art practices are usually defined by their names. For example, 'painting', 'sculpture' and 'drawing' each define at least some part of their creation, that is, the ways in which they are made, while also suggesting the artist's engagement with the history of those media. For 'video art' the name is somewhat misleading.

From a historical perspective, the term 'video art' suggests a cohesive and singular practice that, while it might have changed and evolved through the decades, is much like those other older media, in which there is a singular output using a familiar set of tools.

But from its very beginnings, video art has described a diverse set of practices that have resisted easy definition and which has, in part, been tied to the ways artists have adopted video technologies into their work.

'The practice of video art has adapted and absorbed all these innovations in a surprisingly orthodox way.'

In its earliest form, in the late 1950s, artists began incorporating television sets into sculptural installations. While not actually producing an electronic image, they had captured the means of its delivery, transforming a consumer product into a sculptural object. Select artists were also given access to producing work for television broadcast. And by the end of the 1960s and the arrival of portable video cameras and recorders, artists had access to producing their own work with very few limitations.

As each successive wave of technological innovation made video production cheaper and more accessible, from the days of VHS systems in the 1980s to the early digital era of camcorders and laptop editing 10 years later, to our current moment of 4K mobile phone cameras and limitless online distribution, the practice of video art has adapted and absorbed all these innovations in a surprisingly orthodox way. So, while the term 'video art' might not precisely describe a set of tools, it certainly defines a practice engaged with history.

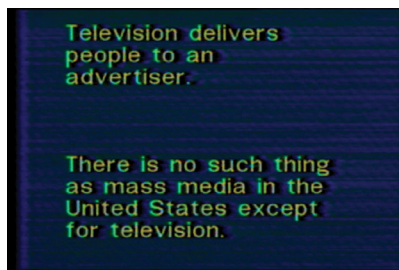
In the works selected for this exhibition we can see the currents of production that have defined the history of that thing we call 'video art'.

A

As video production equipment became more widely available in the late 1960s, video was often used to record performance art, both in public performances, and in private studio settings where the only witness to an event was the artist and their camera.

Bruce Nauman's *Manipulating a fluorescent tube* [1969] is perhaps the perfect example of this kind of work, conceptually engaged with minimalism, perhaps inscrutable to outsiders in its intent, but not without an impressive sense of purity in execution. William Wegman's *Selected works: reel 6* [1975] **A** is an easy entry into conceptualism as the artist engages with his dogs in the same unadorned, minimal fashion as Nauman's fascination with his fluoro tube, but with welcome humour.

Richard Serra's *Television delivers people* [1973] **B** is an early example of artists using video technology to 'speak back' to the medium by engaging with the status of television as a cultural force in late 20th century America. By subverting the infomercial format – scrolling text and canned music accompaniment – Serra offers a commentary on the form of television with an ironic distancing from the subject.

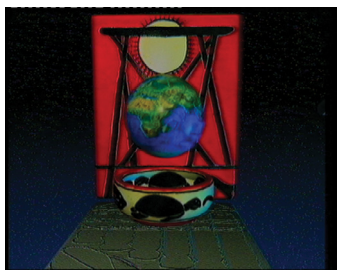
B**C**

A direct conceptual link can be drawn from Serra's piece to Tracey Moffatt and Gary Hillberg's *Revolution* [2008], one video in a series of collaborations that gather multiple clips organised by theme and edited into hyperkinetic montages high on irony and humour. The work is as much the result of the available technology the artists used to make the video, as it is the consequence of the growing archive of material available on physical formats such as DVD, and later found widely online.

Sophie Calle and Gregory Shephard's *Double blind* [1992] **C** is an example of the kinds of extended narrative videos that were made possible by the development of affordable and portable cameras, and the desire of the artists to produce a 'film' – a metafiction of the artists own relationship told in the form of a road movie, with a feature length run time. In *Other faces* [2010-2011] William Kentridge engages with a similar nostalgic fascination for film, but unlike Calle and Shephard, or Moffatt and Hillberg, metafictional irony is replaced instead by a sincere love of the handmade, emotional and transportive qualities of animation, using video simply as a recording and delivery device. Ellen José and



D



E



‘Slowly at first, but gathering pace, we’re witnessing galleries and public museums cautiously engaging with artists’ use of AI’

Marshall White’s *In the balance* [1993] **D** operates in a similar way, a brief and vibrant animation using video technology as both production and delivery device. Bill Viola’s *Passage into night* [2005] **E** calls back in many ways to the earliest days of video art in that the extent of the work is the presentation of a vertical screen, with a mirage-like figure oscillating between form and abstraction.

The threads of conceptualism, humour, irony and sincerity, along with the qualities of each of the works in form and presentation, suggest a cohesive history despite video art’s slippery resistance to strict material definition. Indeed, the constant redefinition of what constitutes video art might give us a clue of where it might be headed.

In the early 2000s, the arrival of high quality video cameras, editing and post production techniques saw an explosion in the amount of video art being made by artists in Australia and

elsewhere. For a kind of art making that has already been around for 50 years there was still a sense that video art was a new thing that had to be reconsidered in the face of a sudden upsurge in making, exhibition and collection.

Jump forward to our current moment and a similar explosion is taking place in artists’ use of AI image and video generation tools. While surrounded by a debate on the ethical uses and impacts of this technology, artists have already begun to engage with its possibilities, partly as a critical engagement with its form and content, but just as much a headlong rush into the thrill of another new thing. Slowly at first, but gathering pace, we’re witnessing galleries and public museums cautiously engaging with artists’ use of AI, a pattern of production that has a direct historical link to video art. Far from a historical category, video art will continue to evolve and expand its definitions, always being reborn, and always being new.

Andrew Frost
May 2026



Sophie Calle

born France 1953

Gregory Shephard (collaborator)

Double blind [still] 1992

single-channel moving image, colour,
sound, 75:58 minutes

National Gallery of Australia, Kammerri/Canberra
Purchased 1995

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95.126

"We [Calle and Gregory Shephard] hadn't been living together for more than a year, but our relationship had worsened to such an extent that we had stopped talking to one another altogether. I dreamed of marrying him. He dreamed of making movies. To get him to travel across America with me, I suggested that we make a film during the trip. He agreed. Our absence of communication gave us the idea of equipping ourselves with separate cameras, making them the sole confidantes of our respective frustrations and secretly telling them all the things we were unable to say to each other."
- Sophie Calle

Ellen José (artist)

Australia 1951–2017

Marshall White (collaborator)

In the balance [still] 1993

computer animated video on magnetic
tape remastered as digital, 2 min 41 sec

National Gallery of Australia, Kammerri/Canberra
Purchased 1994
94.1369

Best known as a photographer and printmaker, Ellen José was a pioneer in Australia's urban Indigenous art movement and a radical activist and social justice campaigner. *In the balance* is one of the earliest examples of an Indigenous artist embracing digital and computer animation in their art making. The title refers to 'life hanging in the balance'.

In 1994 José said of this work: "I became involved in computer generated imagery

as an extension of my visual practice of photography, painting and sculpture. It provides a way for me to combine all the elements of my work into 3-dimensional time and space. My aim is to create the movement of my imagery through time, with sound working to heighten its dimensional sense. To the best of my knowledge, I am only one of a handful of Torres Strait and Koori artists to embrace this new technology to present Indigenous ideas and concepts that are as old as time itself. I hope it empowers Torres Strait and Koori artists to become initiators and controllers of emerging electronic technology, not its servant."

William Kentridge

born South Africa 1955

Other faces [still] 2010–2011

animation of drawings, filmed on HD video
and transferred to DVD

National Gallery of Australia, Kammerri/Canberra
Purchased 2011
2011.1495

From 1989 to 2003 William Kentridge created 9 films about the life of Soho Eckstein, a fictionalised industrialist and property developer living in contemporary South Africa. He returns to the character in *Other faces*. The film is based on drawings Kentridge made over a 12-month period. In the film we see Eckstein as a middle-aged figure dressed in a pinstriped suit, who on occasion looks remarkably like Kentridge (Eckstein's alter ego is Felix, a lover and poet, who also looks like the artist).

The cinematic animation opens with a car accident, where Eckstein collides with the car of a black African preacher and an argument ensues between the 2 drivers. An angry crowd forms in response. The sequence of images that follows suggests something of what it was like to live in South Africa after apartheid was disbanded in 1994. The accident becomes a metaphor for the political turmoil that remained even though racial segregation and white rule had legally ceased.

Tracey Moffatt

born Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 1960

Gary Hillberg (collaborator)

born Perth, Western Australia, Australia 1982

REVOLUTION [still] 2008

single channel video installation (14 mins)

National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
Purchased 2009

2009.625

Tracey Moffatt is arguably Australia's most successful artist on the international art scene, with her work represented in major public and private collections throughout the world. Her conceptual photomedia work is regularly exhibited alongside her international peers such as Annette Messager, Cindy Sherman and Nan Goldin.

A highly receptive child of the 1960s, Tracey Moffatt grew up in Meanjin/Brisbane avidly consuming images from magazines, films and television. Of the centrality of popular cinema and the mass-produced image as the gateway to imagination in her youth, Moffatt has said: "Cinema outings were rare. The first film I saw in a cinema was *Mary Poppins* at age five. I remember the outing vividly. To this day I still believe *Mary Poppins* to be a cinematic masterpiece. Those 1960s big budget Disney technicolour works of art remain a yardstick on which I judge almost all films, and possibly all other art ... I'm always hungry for an image. All over the world I find myself drawn to bookshops. Even in art museums I prefer to visit the bookshop first. I want to see the artwork in reproduction before I see the real thing on the wall. I can stand in a bookshop and easily scan an art magazine or book in five seconds flat – computer-like, taking in, discarding, or storing for later use, for later (so people tell me) 'appropriation.'"

Bruce Nauman

born United States of America 1941

Manipulating a fluorescent tube [still]

1969

video (black and white, sound, 62 minutes)

National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
© Bruce Nauman. ARS/Copyright Agency
2002.587

Bruce Nauman's practice spans a broad range of media including sculpture, photography, neon, video, drawing, printmaking, and performance. He studied mathematics, then art, graduating in 1966, and held his first solo exhibition the same year, showing fibreglass sculptures. From 1966 to 1968 Nauman worked as a teacher at the San Francisco Art Institute while making art in a vacant grocery store in the city. There, he resolved that anything he did there could be art. "Sometimes the activity involved making something, and sometimes the activity [was] the piece," he said.

Often recording his efforts on camera, Nauman used his own body in these works, performing repetitive tasks and exercises for approximately an hour – the standard length of a videotape – in a test of endurance for both the artist and the viewer.

Originally a performance staged in 1965, *Manipulating a fluorescent tube* records the artist manoeuvring a long fluorescent tube, seated on the floor in his darkened studio. Each movement makes the tube an extension of his body. In highlighting the importance of process, Nauman investigates the possibilities of what art may be, thus making himself the raw material for his work.

Richard Serra

United States of America 1938–2024

Carlota Schoolman (collaborator)

Television delivers people [still] 1973

single channel moving image on magnetic tape, colour, sound, 6 min

National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
Purchased 1983

© Richard Serra. ARS/Copyright Agency, 2026
83.2945

Well known for his large-scale abstract sculptures, Richard Serra also made video works over an eleven-year span, from 1968–79, regarding it as a separate part of his practice. He said: "I did not extend sculptural problems into film or video. I began to make sculptures, film and video

at about the same time, so it can't be a question of developing one form into the other. My involvement with different media is based on the recognition of the different material capacities and it is nonsense to think that film or video can be sculptural."

Among Serra's film subjects was his critique of mass media, which peaks with *Television delivers people*. The work satirises the banality of television with scrolling critical messages, such as "the product of television is the audience", while elevator music plays. It warns viewers to consider how television mediates the relationship between corporations and consumers, with viewers themselves becoming products.

Bill Viola

United States of America 1951–2024

Passage into night [still] 2005

colour, high-definition video (50 minutes, silent) displayed on plasma screen

National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
Gift of Annabel and Rupert Myer AM in honour of the staff of the National Gallery of Australia 2011.
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

© Bill Viola
2011.835

Bill Viola is a leading contemporary artist and pioneer of video art. Since the 1970s, his work has evolved into slow-motion meditations, often referring to art of the past, especially medieval and Renaissance paintings. Fire and water are 2 of his most consistent images. Many of Viola's elaborately staged 'performances' suggest spiritual or religious ceremonies, notions of rebirth and transformation. His use of slow motion often emphasises this otherworldliness.

Passage into night shows a female figure in the harsh light and heat of the midday sun. The extreme conditions distort and disturb the air, causing her to undulate and flutter. She begins as an apparition within a mirage, a tiny form in the barren landscape. Gradually her person becomes apparent and eventually her dark robes completely fill the screen, obscuring the natural landscape and transforming the image into a pattern of subtly shifting dark blues and, finally, black. Although her features are revealed, the woman's identity remains a mystery. The silence adds to the sense of mystery.

William Wegman

born United States of America 02 February 1943

Selected works: reel 6 [still] 1975

Video (black and white and colour, sound, 18 minutes)

National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
Purchased 1983

© William Wegman
83.2946

William Wegman studied painting in the 1960s, earning an MFA, and moved to California in 1970. There, Wegman got his dog, a Weimaraner which he named Man Ray, after the avant-garde artist, and the pair began a long and fruitful collaboration. Man Ray was known in the art world for his endearing deadpan presence, and he became a central figure in Wegman's photographs and videotapes.

Man Ray died in 1982 and in 1986 Wegman got a new dog, Fay Ray. The pair's collaboration was marked by Wegman's extensive use of a Polaroid camera. With the birth of Fay's litter in 1989, Wegman's cast of subjects grew to include Fay's offspring.

These works of art are on long term loan from the National Gallery of Australia with support from the Australian Government as part of Sharing the National Collection. #artacrossaustralia

Test Frames

Test frames is a commissioning initiative developed by Logan Art Gallery and embedded within *Beyond frames*, introducing new moving image work every 6 months. Each commission is created by a local or regionally connected artist, foregrounding current voices from the area within a wider national and international frame. Presented alongside *Beyond frames*, *Test frames* brings a distinct contemporary perspective to the exhibition, extending its scope while reinforcing the moving image as an active, evolving form shaped by the urgencies and conditions of the present.

Aish Manning is an interdisciplinary artist working on the lands of the Turrbal and Yagara people in Magandjin (Brisbane). Their practice centres on time-based, site-specific and performative forms, shaped by a distinct video language that embraces the awkward, improvised and unscripted. Working with everyday materials and crude puppetry, Manning creates tension-filled, often futile interactions that balance humour with vulnerability. Their work explores themes of absurdity and embodiment, informed by lived experience as a trans, non-binary person.



Aish Manning, *Relief work*, 2026, single-channel HD video 16:9, 23:15mins, colour, with sound.



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