Epilogue

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During the fall of 2007, the Stedelijk Museum CS in Amsterdam presented the exhibition *Andy Warhol. Other Voices, Other Rooms*.[1] Curated by Eva Meyer-Hermann, the exhibition put forward the great variety of media Warhol used in his career such as film, photography, video, sound, graphic design, painting, and printmaking. Divided in three main sections – *Cosmos*, *Filmscape*, and *TV-Scape* – the exhibition shed light on artworks within Warhol's oeuvre that were not yet widely known by the public: his films and videotapes. The section *Cosmos* was conceived as an inventory of all the media and themes Warhol had worked with. The artworks in that section – drawings, paintings, Polaroids, postcards, LP sleeves, and so on – were spread out on 28 different pillars. The section *TV-Scape* comprised the 42 television episodes that Andy Warhol made for New York TV companies and for MTV between 1979 and 1987, and a series of unknown video pieces dating from the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, the section *Filmscape* was subdivided in four spaces named *Screen Tests*, *Films*, *Silver Clouds*, and *Theatre*. A first room was dedicated to the presentation of the artist's *Screen Tests*, a series of short films the artist had made by asking his peers as well as strangers to pose, sitting as still as possible, until the three-minute reel used for the shooting ran out. In order to extend the duration of the *Screen Tests*, Warhol decided to project them at 16 frames per second rather than at 24 frames per second, and the films ended up being four minutes long each. The next room of the section *Filmscape* featured 19 films, all of which were projected simultaneously (see Fig. 11.1 in color section). On the back wall of that space, a large window the size of a projection screen opened up onto the room where the *Silver Clouds* – floating balloons of helium – were presented. Ultimately, when the visitors left that exhibition space, they could walk to the theater where eight other of Warhol's films were projected in a two-day cycle. These films had not been integrated in the *Filmscape* room of the exhibition

because the curator decided their dramatic structure required that they be shown from start to finish, rather than as a loop.

The setup of this exhibition positioned the films and television works as a logical extension of the themes and issues such as portraiture, celebrity, repetition, seriality, and the multiplication of images that Warhol explored in his better-known paintings, drawings, and sculptures. In that sense, the exhibition illustrates how media art has become more firmly situated within art history in recent years. Ironically, it may have been the renewed interest in film and video by visual artists from the 1990s that led to a rediscovery and revaluation of Warhol's time-based artworks, as well as those by other artists and experimental filmmakers in the 1960s and 1970s. Like many of the artists discussed in this book, Warhol used the *mediums* of film and video in ways that challenge the conventions and cultural impact of the *media* related to them (cinema and television, respectively), thus provoking new ways of viewing and interacting with these media. For example, his films lack the clear structure of mainstream narrative films, instead simply observing the members of the group of people that hung around his studio. The *Screen Tests*, with their almost non-moving subjects and slowed-down projection speed, expose film's paradoxical relation to time (capturing reality in still photographs that, because of the movement of the filmstrip in the projector at 24 frames a second, create the illusion of movement), thus puncturing the suspension of disbelief that characterizes traditional cinematic spectatorship. Yet while the works refer thematically in many ways to the ontology of film, in order to be projected, they had to be transferred to non-film carriers and another projection system.[2] Both in its overview of the way Warhol employed time-based media in his artistic production and its design and technical setup, the exhibition *Andy Warhol. Other Voices, Other Rooms* epitomizes many of the issues discussed in this book and thus serves as a suitable anchor for its conclusion.

MIGRATION AS AN EXHIBITION STRATEGY

For the making of his films, Andy Warhol had used 16mm-film reels, and in the case of his videotapes, 1-inch reel-to-reel and ½-inch reel-to-reel. Considering the ephemerality of these carriers, and also to facilitate their looped presentation, in the exhibition *Andy Warhol. Other Voices, Other Rooms*, the films were transferred to high definition video files (HDD) and the videotapes were migrated to digital video files (DVD). Various texts in this book discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such migrations. One of the reasons to support presenting the films on a digitized format is that it enabled them to be shown continuously, and also, simultaneously – thus allowing a comparison between the

films. Considering that film projectors make more noise than video projectors, the simultaneous projection of 19 films was only possible with the use of video projectors.[3] However, if a step is skipped during the migration process, there are consequences for the aesthetic appearance of a work. In this specific case, the video images projected had not been *de-interlaced*.

The feature of interlaced images is specific to the video format. Both analogue and digital video images are built up from horizontal lines. Every 1/25th of a second, a complete image is written on the screen starting at the upper left-hand corner up to the lower right-hand corner. This is done in two steps. First the uneven lines are drawn: from line 1 to 599. This is called the upper field. Second, the lower field, consisting of the even lines 2 to 600, is generated. There is thus a 1/50th of a second time lag between the two layers, but this time lag is invisible to the human eye. This manner of generating images is called "interlacing."[4]

When a film needs to be transferred to video format, a digital scan of the work provides the best image quality. In the specific case of the films shown in *Andy Warhol. Other Voices, Other Rooms*, the films had been previously transferred to an analogue video format. In order to avoid the highly expensive costs of digitizing the original films, the digitization was based on earlier analogue video transfers. However, when an analogue video is transferred to a digital format, the digital formats record the two fields described above simultaneously. The consequence of this is that the time lag between the upper and lower field become visible. This resulting visual distortion can be removed through the process of *de-interlacing*, a method involving the removal of one of the fields and the duplication of the other to substitute for the field removed.[5] Since this method of de-interlacing was not applied in the digitization of the analogue video transfers of Warhol's films, the lines remained visible, especially to those who are more sensitive to the effects of the digitization of analogue videos on the quality of the image. This case demonstrates the consequences of obsolete technologies and migration strategies discussed throughout this book.

FILM AND TV: SWITCHING PLACES

The exhibition *Andy Warhol. Other Voices, Other Rooms* stood out from other monographic exhibitions on the work of Warhol held in the last decade because of its focus on lesser-known works by the artist – his films and videotapes – but also because of the manner in which the artworks were presented. For instance, the choice of presenting 19 films simultaneously in the same space was audacious, but also technically challenging. It created, as this sec-

tion of the exhibition was called, a *Filmscape*. In a way, this setup appeared to transform the entire space into one installation, almost a work of art in itself. However, in the exhibition catalogue, curator Eva Meyer-Hermann argued: "This presentation is neither pure documentation nor work of art: it does not fully conform to any usual expectations yet it has something of everything" (Meyer-Hermann, 2007: 139).

Showing many of Warhol's films in proximity to one another had the advantage of making the films enter into dialogue with one another, but it also had a distracting effect: the attention of the visitors was fragmented and distributed over space and time. The fact that each projection screen was accompanied by a numeric clock displaying the remaining time of the screening, invited visitors to stay, move on, or return, thus further stimulating their *flânerie*-like spectatorship of the films. In this sense, the *Filmscape* was characterized by the distracted, fragmented viewing position that is usually associated with watching television in a private home (see Caldwell, 1995). In contrast, the television works shown in the *TV-Scape* had to be viewed and listened to in isolation, seated on a star-shaped stool in front of one of the monitors with a set of headphones for the sound, positioning the visitor in the fixed viewing position normally associated with the cinema theater (see Fig. 11.2 in color section).[6] The choice of presentation in this exhibition was very Warholesque in that the artist himself experimented widely with the presentation of his films in the 1960s. For instance, the expanded cinema production *Exploring Plastic Inevitable* was presented in several locations between 1966 and 1967 and was a complex project in which Warhol's films were only one of the elements. This production included, among other things, film projections, slide projections, strobe lights, and sets by the Velvet Underground and Nico (Fig. 1.3).[7] The presentation format chosen at the Stedelijk Museum CS demonstrates that there is not one perfect manner of exhibiting Warhol's films, but several, and some of them are more experimental than others.

TIME TRAVELING

Warhol was fundamentally concerned with the "now" of his time; thematically as well as formally, his works are very much about the present. In that sense the exhibition *Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms* raised the wider question of how to exhibit works that refer to a past present. The exhibition gave the films a new presence, by transferring them to a contemporary, digital video format and by showing them in the kind of screen-scape so characteristic for contemporary urban screen culture (see Verhoeff, 2012). The digital clocks beside each of the films, counting down to their ending, emphasized

the visitors' situatedness in the here and now. The *TV-Scape*, with its isolated, fixed viewing and listening position, invited a concentrated experience of the television work that it did not have when originally broadcast, removing it from the flow and liveness of television and inscribing it in the history of Warhol's oeuvre and in wider art and media history. The complex relation of this exhibition to time is nicely illustrated by the work *Time Capsule 61*, exhibited in the *Cosmos* section: a cardboard box in which Warhol put all the knick-knacks and memorabilia that he found relevant at the time. He knew that in due time people would open these boxes and would try to discover a seemingly logical order to its contents (Hofmans, 2007). In that sense, the upside-down *Time Capsule 61* in the exhibition is a nice metaphor for the fact that preserving and exhibiting media art always entails interpretation, choices, and the acceptance of a certain degree of change.

Seen from an archaeological perspective, the coexistence of various mediums, formats, and exhibition techniques and styles is not something to be avoided, but a way to make the past experiential in the present. In that sense, preservationists and curators of media art facing obsolete technologies have a certain freedom in determining preservation and exhibition strategies, ranging from the repair or replacement of contemporary technologies to more radical reconstructions. As pointed out throughout this book, such an approach requires that the preservationist and curator respect the artwork's logic, distinguishing between the work's core – those elements considered crucial to its identity – and its appearance, artistic concept, and historical context – elements which might be susceptible to change over time. Additionally, it requires extensive and multilayered modes of documentation, so that future preservationists and curators can make new, well-informed decisions about the appearance and functionality of a work. And the special nature of media art, situated between art, media, and popular culture, also requires a type of archiving that documents not only the technologies used, but also the cultural practices related to them.

Andy Warhol, besides having been a highly influential 20th-century artist, can retrospectively also serve as a model for such a preservationist/curator. In the creation and exhibition of his film installation *Outer and Inner Space* (1965) Warhol combined these roles in interesting ways. *Outer and Inner Space* is a portrait of Edie Sedgwick, filmed while watching a prerecorded videotape of herself playing on a monitor next to her. Since in the video recording Sedgwick faces left, the film appears to show Edie having a conversation with herself. Thematically the work reflects on the relation between film and video, with the making of the video inviting the making of the film, rather than the other way around. At the same time, and ironically, the fact that Warhol recorded the video registration on film ensured its survival – the original Norelco vide-

otapes can no longer be played back (Angell, 2002). The work also refers to many other core themes in Warhol's work related to celebrity, media attention, and the multiplication of images – themes still relevant to our present-day media-saturated world. Finally, Warhol experimented with the exhibition of this work, alternating between cinema theater screenings and gallery projections, either with a single screen or with a double one – the latter turning Edie's double portrait into a quadruple one (as in the Stedelijk Museum CS exhibition). In that sense, Warhol serves as a model for any preservationist or curator ready to take up the challenges posed by preserving and exhibiting media art.

NOTES

1 *Andy Warhol: Other Voices, Other Rooms*, 12 October 2007-14 January 2008. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum CS. In the years that followed, the exhibition traveled to other venues such as the Moderna Museet Stockholm, the Hayward Gallery in London, and the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio.

2 Similarly, the TV works, recorded on videotape for broadcasting purposes, were shown in this exhibition as DVDs on television monitors.

3 Electrostatic speakers by the Finnish firm Panphonics were also used to focus the sound in a specific place in space. For details on this sound system, see the Panphonics website: http://www.panphonics.com/solutions/museums-exhibitions-directional-audio-solution. Last access 5 July 2012.

4 The authors would like to thank Gert Hoogeveen, Head of Audiovisuals at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, for his time and for generously answering their technical questions.

5 The consequence of this method is a reduction by half of the image information, causing a considerable blurring of the images, but there are ways to compensate for this.

6 For a detailed analysis of the way this exhibition relates to cinematic spectatorship see Hesselberth (2012: 35-63).

7 Ronald Nameth's film *Andy Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (1967), which documents some of the performances of this production, was screened in the introductory room at the Stedelijk Museum CS exhibition.

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