

Background or phase 1

I started in the mid 70's to work with the then new media: VIDEO.

Already in 1971 while traveling in Germany, Holland and France, I was acquainted with this new phenomenon within the art world: VIDEO ART. In 1977 I changed my study department at the School of Architecture in Copenhagen and started at the Department of Visual Communications - AV - Lab. There I explored the video medium's potential as an art tool. Quickly the rumore among friends spread, that I had access to video equipment. I got engaged in video documentation of 'Billedstof Theatre's first major show at the Glyptotek (tape has unfortunately been lost), 24-hour concert at the Open Scene and documentations of Living Movements rehearsals and performances the same place - with this unhandy and technically outdated first generation video equipment (Black and White SONY Porta Pack). My 'career' as a video documentarist of "Time Based Art " had begun.



'Time-Based Art' is art forms that have in common, that they have a beginning and an end - in short: is Time Based - and is often presented 'LIVE' to an audience. The classic Time Based Arts are known from the beginning of culture and art: music, song, theater, dance and poetry.

Since the beginning of the 20's century with the Futurists and Dadaists, the 'Time-Based Art' have made its entry in the visual arts, into what we today call Performance or Intermedia Art and in what we call Experimental Film or Art film.

'The Time-Based Art' (if we for a moment disregard Experimental film) have no art institutions that preserve and intermediate these art forms *per se*. "Time Based Art "can not hang on a wall or be placed on a plinth or stored in a warehouse and retrieved and displayed at a later date to an audience. "Time Based Artworks" can only be experienced when it's happening and most often leaves behind no physical artwork.

BUT! "Time Based Art "can be preserved in another time based media such as the video media, in the form of a documentation, if it is recorded with this in mind.

TVF has set itself the aim to documenting "Time Based Art"and to preserve this art form for the future.

There are not many Governmental supported institutions (museums and public collections) that ensure this kind of art is documented, let alone preserving already existing documentations.

And what is worse - no subsidies, which could make it economically feasible to document 'Time Based Art "unless it is in the form of "commercial TV" productions and I think we all know how little focus there is on this kind of possible programs, in sharp competition with the entertainment industry in the TV media.

Where not specifically mentioned, no funding is available for video documentation - which is the cases in subsidies department of the Ministry of Culture in Denmark, where I was living until 2002 or in Flanderen, where I have been living since. **Museums can not even apply for funding for video documentation and conservation of already existing documentations.** This is how the situation is now a days !!!!! – and we write 2012 !!!!

This important area of art is left behind as one - story loosely brackets, at most, preserved in the 1000 fraction of a second in the form of photographs, but this reflect not the 'Time Based' character of audiovisual form.

More about that later in this self-interview. Now back to the real story about TVF Art Archive.



Phase 2

In 1980 came the next revolution of the video equipment. The portable color video equipment in the format VHS came on the market in Denmark. It cost the same as a new Volkswagen car so in order to pay it, I made an agreement with Open Stage on fixed weekly video recording of rehearsals with new material and their performances. At that time, several American dancers and choreographers settled down in Copenhagen and established companies, and trained the new generation of upcoming modern dancers and choreographers. They knew about the video medium as a 'confrontation tool' for the dancers (They could now see themselves!) and soon I made video recordings throughout the new dance environment that emerged in those years.

TVF has since documented an essential part of the dance productions, created in this country and foreign products shown in Denmark, until around 2005.

see www.artvideo.tv Dance & Performance Dance.



All though the proportion of TVF Art Archive that contain historical audiovisual material to illustrate contemporary history of Contemporary Dance in Denmark from 1980 – 2005, the archive is not immediately available in Denmark - TVF is located in Ghent, Belgium, since 2002.

All video content up to approx. year 2000 is recorded on **analog video tapes**. These tapes are rapidly on the way to dissolve and therefore urgent in danger of being lost, if they (those who can still play) are not digitized. Only then can they be secured for future use.

Alongside dance documentation, I started documenting the 'Time Base Visual Arts' in the hectic early '80s, with the advent of the "Junge Wilde", the rediscovery of performance genre, experiments in the free improvisational music, video art and all mixed forms, that emerged in those years both within the visual arts and new visual theater forms.

TVF was not formed yet - I worked under the name VIDEO FOOLS - where I recorded street theater, performance, and started the first formal collaboration with the Festival of Fools (later KIT). Many of the performances from the first Festival of Fools were documented.



Phase 3

In 1983 I took the initiative for the formation of the TREKANTEN (the Triangle) - Audio Visual Gallery and Art Space, in Viktoriagade7, Copenhagen. It evolved from being the first video group to an "institution" for the 'new' art forms, where the videos were produced and video art from England and Holland, Germany etc was presented, along with performance and even dance performances and music were the contents of the numerous events TREKANTEN stood for until 1990.

In 1985 one of founding members Tim Groot returned to Amsterdam and TREKANTEN stood even without our most primitive editing system: a VHS player and a Betamax recorder. We needed editing equipment so we could edit our footage. The only way that could be done was that I created a video production company Trekanten Video Formidling (TVF), which purchased a 2nd hand U-Matic editing equipment on a bank loan!. And we worked hard the following years with repayments. We produced video for dance companies, visual artists who needed video productions - beside our individual and group productions created during those years.

TVF was now a video production company specializing in the documentation of 'Time Based Art' through the productions I made in that context.

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Phase 4

In 1990 TREKANTEN dissolved and continued until 2001 under the name artcinema OFFOFF, where I together with a small group of people, for more than 10 years presented the Experimental film history and development from 1920 to the present day.

TVF continued as my video production company and the archive became bigger and bigger as the number of productions I did emerged. Video equipment was along the road upgraded, costing money which had to be earned with the documentation work. But the biggest part of the productions were not

paying jobs, but came into being on my own initiative and were paid by me, who then had to earn this amount by paying jobs.



The visual art scene was developing rapidly in the early 80's and through the work in TREKANTEN, I was in contact with artists who worked with different expressions. Værkstedet VÆRST, then a new art school, was formed and I began years long collaboration with video documentation of their productions.

In the middle eighties, a new wind started blowing at the State Museum of Fine Art, where TVF began a longstanding collaboration on documentation of events, documentation of building up exhibitions and the exhibitions and interviews with artists. See www.artvideo.tv

St. Agnes Gallery in Roskilde was during these years transformed into 'Museum of Contemporary Art' and TVF started right from the start a collaboration around video documentation of events, performance, exhibition documentation and interviews with artists until I moved to Belgium.

As the National Gallery (State Museum of Fine Art) went into hibernation again in the late '90s, new times in the Copenhagen exhibition building NIKOLAJ stirred, and TVF of course started a similar cooperation with them on video documentation.



All these recordings are of course recorded on analog tapes and is together with the other analog archive in immediate danger of dissolving. Together with the other works in the video documentary archive, this archive is a important contributor with documentation of art and culture within the specific time period.

But without economic means for digitizing and editing it will not be preserved for the future. We will be back to a sort of 'Gutenberg society' - where only art will be preserved if it is in a form of an art 'object' (even as digital information at the Internet - SIC!) But no evidence of "Time Based Art" can be preserved in a time-based form.

We use to say that we live in the 'Information Age' and with daily digital exchange of information on past and present - even about art. But preservation of something as simple as video documentation in a Time Based form is in the current situation apparently not feasible.

As mentioned earlier, during the first Festival of Fools 1980 I documented part of the performances and this cooperation was resumed in 1993 when I began a longtime collaboration with Copenhagen International Theatre (KIT) and also with Kanonhallen, where productions from the period 1993 to 2005 were documented. Also the unique series of seminars around, theater, dance, theater performance has been documented. Together, this material is an essential source of video documentations of theater history from the period.



Documentation of poetry and poly-poetry (eg, sound poetry and visual poetry) also have an important place in the TVF Art Archive. Since the memorable initiative from Nils Ufer: "While the others read the Sunday newspaper ..." in Byens Lys, Christiania, in the '80s, where some of our now famous poets (DK) read / performed their works, many for the first time in the 'public' TVF have, when the opportunity have emerged, documented when the poets have submitted their works to an audience. Although the international Sound Poetry, have during the last year been documented for the archive. For more information see www.artvideo.tv **Poetry & Poly Poetry**

Phase 5

In 2001 I was made redundant from my 'bread & butter' job as repro photographer in a newspaper. As a result of that, I had to close down artcinema OFFOFF and my house in Copenhagen and I moved to Gent in Belgium. I continued my video company TVF and worked for Copenhagen International Theater and Kanonhallen documenting all of these productions until 2006, going back and forth Gent – Copenhagen.

Gent was in those times a vibrant cultural city with many festivals and initiatives with in Contemporary / Experimental music, Visual Art, Sound Poetry etc. so very soon I got involved in making video documentation in Gent, and in other big cities in/around Flanders: Antwerp and Brussels.

Already in 1985, I was on a round trip with Carl Nørrested (my usual interviewer and co-maker of many video programs) and in Belgium we first made a program about the Art Video scene in Brussels (seen from the Flanders side) and then we went on to Gent to make a documentary about LOGOS Foundation, - a rare place for experimental music, instrument- making/innovation and a concert hall with a international reputation. Since then I revisited LOGOS many times and it was the reason why I decided to settle down in Gent of all places. Immediately I started to make video documentation of the weekly activities in LOGOS. (See www.artvideo.tv ("Other Sounds" & "Concerts")



A few years before I left Denmark I had completed an upgrade of my video production equipment – to at that time State Of The Art: Non-linear video editing (Computer) and DVCAM digital tape camera. A big quality step up to get better video and definitively left the analogue era in the new productions. But still approx 1500 titles of analogue tapes/production were on the shelves of the archive - screening to be converted and preserved. But already at that time, I could not raise the money to do so – I didn't had my income from my newspaper job – I was working as a independent video maker and had to make my income from productions for costumers (K.I.T. & Kanonhallen) in DK and the few pay job I got in Belgium. So I had to let the 'old tapes' keeping screaming on the shelves.

In Gent a new International Poly Poetry festival organized by the organisation KRIKRI had just started and I had the privilege to document all the festivals (1 – 7) and side activities up to 2011 when the organisation unfortunately closed.

But a unique archive of International Sound Poetry is now in the TVF Art Archive.



In Copenhagen I had long term collaborations with museums, exhibition venues etc making video documentations of art performances, documentations of exhibitions and art events and that Practise I continued in Gent – Antwerp – Brussels. Just to name a few of these productions: I made from 2006 – 2011 about 30 documentations programs for S.M.A.K.(Gent) every thing from documentation of works with a Time Based character, documentations of Performances, documentations of building up major art exhibitions and documentations of exhibitions with introductions by the artists.(Paul McCarthy, Guillaume Bijl, Nedko Solakov, Dara Birnbaum, Mark Manders, Michel Francois, Honoré d'O) In Antwerpen for 1 year I made more than 6 documentations of exhibitions around the 25 years celebration of MuhKA , for Vooruit (Gent) for 1 year I documented NEW MEDIA exhibitions and related artists lectures.



In 2003 after having made 7 Living Room Film Festivals (a monthly presentation of Experimental Film in my living room) and the amazing public event ' The Longest Night Of the Experimental Film' in Carmensclooster, Gent – 24 hours non stop film program attended by about 800 people – I took together with Hans Martens, the initiative to re-open Art Cinema OFFOFF in Gent. I became an important 'institution' that was setting the experimental film on the agenda on weekly programs and attended a steady audience after many years absence of a screenings of experimental film in Flanders - just like artcinema OFFOFF in Copenhagen did. I 2007 I had to stop my involvement in Art Cinema OFFOFF Gent – but it continue to exist with other people in charge.



Music and concerts may not be the most obvious thing to document with one camera – but I consider it as an important Time Based Art and have since the early day of TVF and even before, done a substantial amount of documentation of music & concerts with a strong visual approach. In Gent , Brussels and Antwerp I have recorded Classic Music, Contemporary Music, Music Theater & Chamber Operas and Experimental Music for now 11 years.



Since my involvement in Free Improvised Music in the 80', TVF have documented International concerts in several counties and that continued also after TVF moved to Gent. I took awhile to get into the circuit – its not an art form that get much publicity – if any. But now I record regular concerts, Jam sessions etc in Gent, Brussels and Antwerp.



Poetry and poetry readings is also an 'old' topic for TVF Art Archive. Gent host the Flemish Poetry Center, and around the Flemish part of Belgium there are several organisations and individuals that organize Poetry Readings and Festivals and TVF make documentation (TAZ & de letteren Ooestende 2003, Poëzie in RhoK, 2003 Brussels, Gent Poëzie Festival 2005, ZAOEM 2008, Poëzie Centrum/ KRIKRI, Over de Grens, Sint- Niklaas 2010, Het Kluger Effect 2011, Zebrastraat, Gent o.a). I even made the DVD for a anthology of prisons poetry OPENINGEN – Gevangenisgedichte ed. Benno Barnard & Roger M.J.de Neef (published 2009) and portrait video of a distinguish sculptor and an international well known Visual Poet, Renaat Ramon.



The Art Performance is a genre that TVF have documented from the start in 1985 and even earlier and I continue the record and preserve this Time Based Art genre per excellence. The Performance art have many faces and are represented in various genre in the TVF Archive (Endless Story of Fluxus, Live Art, Performance, Theater Performance & Dance and Dance Performance – so just explore the TVF Archive.



STATUS December 2012

Now after 35 years of video documentation of art and 27 years after the official launch of the TVF Art Archive, finally it might, in the coming years, be possibilities to set the TVF Art Archive on-line. More on that in a later update.

It's a mega operation – more that 3000 production have to be converted to a format that will work on the internet, still 1500 analogue productions have to be digitized, edit, colour corrected etc. and 1500 that still is on digital tapes (DVCAM) have to be converted to a format supported of the internet – but little by little it will form a unique art archive that will be accessible for viewing on-line. Downloading of video programs will the only be allowed after agreement with TVF and for Academic use only.

TVF have now entered the 21th century on the video production side, producing and editing on HD. That is a challenge in all aspects, 8 times bigger video files on hard disks, pressing the editing programs to the limit, getting used to the zilly format 16:9 (scalping all persons in close ups), using new programs for making DVD, Blue-Ray, Youtube video clips etc, etc.

Sincerely,



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 Look also [www.youtube.com /artvideotv](http://www.youtube.com/artvideotv)

PS.

The TVF Art Archive is an INTERNATIONAL Art Archive as well that Art is INTERNATIONAL. In the archive you will find video documentations grouped in different genre of practical reason. Art is not always easy to put in different 'boxes' (genre) –its mostly some thing art historians invent but not that restrict the artist to work in many different ways, in various medias, and environments. Also the Art Archive have been build up over more than 30 years and reflects the ever change expressions from the artists.

Any way there is the following general genres that are represented in the TVF Art Archive.

1. **Other Sounds:** Various expressions of the cross-over with music/sound and a visual representation. It ranges from avant-garde music, experimental music, sound poetry, audio artworks, installations and performance's that have a significant both audio and visual aspect.
2. **The Endless story of FLUXUS:** Documentations of FLUXUS activities as group work from 1985 and up today or as individual artists. Its video recordings of events or interviews with the artists.
3. **Performance:** Since the early days of DADA, performance (the artist as live performer) has been and integrated part of the visual art. The archive have examples of some of its representation from 1980 an on.
4. **Exhibitions and installations.** Exhibitions of 3 dimensional of 4 dimensional (time) art that have a limited period of existence, is preserved in a time-based media: video. It is not the artwork it's self but a way of keeping is for later use/information. The archive contains documentations from many different exhibitions/events as well as installations works from many artists from different countries.
5. **Interviews.** In the archive one can find interviews with visual artists, audiovisual artists, video artists, independent filmmakers and experimental filmmakers.
6. **Lectures & Seminars.** Lectures by artists or about art, seminars about contemporary dance & theater often in a cross over between theater/dance and audiovisual art (Body Art, Live Art, performance etc)
7. **Dance & Performance Dance.** Documentations of contemporary Dance (national and international)
8. **Theater & Performance Theater.** Documentation of various forms of Theater performances (national & international)
9. **Poetry & Poly Poetry.** Documentations of poetry readings and festivals from traditional poetry to Poly Poetry (Sound Poetry, (Audio)Visual poetry, Poetry in combination with music etc)
10. **Music & Concerts.** Documentations of various form of Music Performances and concerts from classic music to experimental music incl. Free improvisation music.