

IN THE ART GALLERIES



A Bloom in the Wasteland

CHARLOTTE WILLARD

It is very likely that Nam June Paik is one of the precursors of a new breed of artists who are also scientists, philosophers and engineers—a modern version of the Renaissance man, the heir and master of the new knowledge.

Nam June Paik has been experimenting with the meshing of art and electrons since his first show in 1965. Before then, as a musicologist, he was famous or rather notorious for the pianos he smashed in the interest of new sounds.

Now he is merely destroying the images of conventional TV, but here Paik is offering the viewer not only a new art form he can manipulate but a new visual experience. Currently the Bonino Gallery is presenting a series of his work which is part of his "Research and Development" project at the State University of New York under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

What is offered to us are

abstract moving images which can be brought into being with a flick of a switch from standard color TV programs.

Paik has harnessed his skills as an engineer to his talent as an artist to bring about the transformations. By attaching electromagnets and other distorting devices to any TV equipment he estimates he can create at least 500 different abstract possibilities from a normal TV program.

One of the variations is based on a form that is fundamentally a moving arc. By increasing the frequencies the arc becomes something he calls a "Marsnal McButterfly" with gossamer multi-colored wings that then proceeds to dance languorously

or swiftly on the screen according to your control.

On another TV screen a simple ball composed of multi-colored round spots is transformed in an Op Art sphere. The spots become squares and the shape undulates and pulsates like a moving undersea creature. Then we see the great McLuhan himself—this time with a distorted face as if it were a rubber mask.

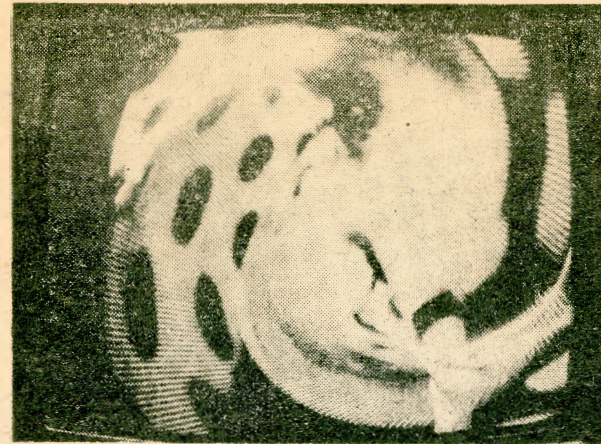
What is additionally interesting is that in all these experiments the luminosity of paint is replaced by direct light—the non-material medium—light which you can see, which moves and yet which you cannot hold or even touch—light the great new art medium.

All of this points to a time when TV will not only give us its present messages but will allow us to construct our own. Last day.

Bonino Gallery, 7 W. 57th St.

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Robert Arner's paintings are experiments in color and a system of motion that the artist says he has learned from the



Electromagnets are used by Nam June Paik to distort normal color TV program to get complicated abstract images like this "McLuhan—(McSnob)" = McButterfly." Gallery Bonino, 7 West 57th Street.

machine. A grid pattern which he set up and his original color decision make the development of his canvas inevitable. One square structure demands the next, one color calls for its harmonic complement.

A square grid super-imposed on a series of three or four colors suggests distances and spaces, pyramidal, horizontal and vertical forms and both vertical and horizontal movement.

I like particularly a piece in blue with soft red rectangular lozenges in which the rectangular element begins as a large solid unit and gradually diminishes into a line. Below the process is reversed, making the composition strangely musical in its effect.

Ruth White Gallery, 42 E. 57th St.

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Luise Kaish, who works in the Renaissance tradition of sculpture would have been at home designing doors for cathedrals. In her new bronze "Ark Doors" for the Temple Beth Shalom in Wilmington, Del., she attains a sense of power and authority leavened with a poetic innocence that gives her pieces universal appeal.

Her "Ark Door," the masterpiece in her show, is a great sphere into which she has carved in high relief the sacred Hebrew characters of the 10 commandments, emphasized by symbols from the Kabala which infer the connection between man and God. Last day.

Stampfl, 47 E. 77th St.