6 THE MUSEUM AS TV PRODUCER
Televisual Form in Curating, Commissioning, and Public Programming

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Art museums and institutions have long sought to find ways of extending their programming through television. This is evidenced by Lynn Spigel's (2008) research on the Television Project, an initiative developed by New York's Museum of Modern Art, with the support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, over three years during the early 1950s. Spigel's research demonstrates that art institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) were interested in TV before it had fully emerged as an object of artistic inquiry, and certainly long before artists had begun to incorporate television receivers into sculptural works and performance events. In recent years, art and media scholars have begun to examine histories of art–television exchange more closely, and the result has been a number of important publications (Mehring 2008; Wyver 2009; Sutton 2011). Yet there currently exists no comprehensive account of television as a focus for art institutional practices of curating, commissioning, and public programming. This chapter does not attempt to offer such an account; rather, it looks more closely at a selection of TV-themed projects realized since the 1970s with the involvement of various art institutions, curators, and artists. The institutions include Long Beach Museum of Art in Long Beach, California; the Hammer Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art, both in Los Angeles; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Kunstverein München (Munich); the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius, Lithuania; the Rooseum in Malmö; the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London; the Museum d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, and the Sydney Biennale. Through analysis of these projects, I identify a number of significant shifts in the relationship between television and the art museum, and also consider the role played by artists and curators in articulating television's altered status as a cultural form.[1]

The International Handbooks of Museum Studies: Museum Media, First Edition.
Edited by Michelle Henning.
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MoMA's Television Project was an attempt to understand, through research, the altered situation and function of the art museum in the "age of television" (Spigel 2008, 151). Its contributors were acutely aware of the growing significance of television in contemporary society, and the attendant changes wrought in practices of leisure and consumption, which would impact on the future of the museum. Two decades later, the programs developed at Long Beach Museum of Art (LBMA) took up the challenge of curating and commissioning within a cultural, economic, and social environment where television continued to occupy a central, even dominant, role. But, unlike their predecessors at MoMA, the curators at LBMA were engaging with television as an established object (and setting) for artistic inquiry. Here I am referring not only to the activities of the first wave of artists working with television as medium and object, including Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell among others, but also to the expansion of video production by artists and activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Huffman 1990). The history of TV-focused activity at LBMA was also directly shaped by changes in the economy and technology of television, since it developed from an initial plan to establish a cable TV studio facility within the museum's new building (Sutton 2011, 122).

By the late 1990s, artists and art institutions were proposing an even more expansive notion of the televisual, sometimes involving the development of TV-themed content for online platforms. I am referring here to GALA Committee's online exploration of television fandom, as part of a project developed for exhibition at the LA Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in 1997, and also to various TV-themed initiatives developed by European art centers in the early 2000s (Farquharson 2006). These projects communicate a fascination with television as a mutable and adaptable form, which can be reconfigured and repurposed to serve the needs of art institutions. By this point, some artists and curators were also beginning to directly address television's displacement by newer media, as evidenced by the online exhibition *TV Swansong* (discussed below), which provocatively announced television's demise in 2002. Yet, even in a definitively "post-broadcast" era, art institutions continue to engage with familiar broadcast formats such as the talk show, as evidenced by exhibitions and public programs developed within such diverse contexts as the Munich Kunstverein and the Hammer Museum (both discussed below). For some artists and curators, appropriations of this type enable a critique of television as a conduit for celebrity-driven entertainment culture. But, in other institutional contexts, the talk show is understood as a platform for political discourse, as evidenced by the Hammer Forum, a current affairs themed program of public debates at the Hammer Museum.

Before they can be analyzed more closely, developments in TV-themed commissioning, curating, and programming need to be situated in relation to broader transformations in practices and processes of television production and reception, occurring within local, national, and supranational contexts that are culturally and historically distinct. In the 1950s and 1960s the television landscape in the United States was dominated by a small number of powerful networks and their affiliates, while the European landscape was largely organized around state-supported and

regulated public broadcasters, initially with limited domestic competition. Toward the end of the 1960s, a new political imperative to legitimate television as a public cultural form in the United States contributed to a wave of "guerrilla television" production by artists and activists over the following decade (Boyle 1997). The late 1960s and early 1970s also witnessed a number of important art–television exchanges in Germany and the Netherlands (Wyver 2009), and the intermittent support could be found for artist-produced television in various European contexts during the 1970s and 1980s. For example, formal experimentation in television was actively encouraged in some European socialist states, as evidenced by the television show *TV Gallery* produced by Belgrade Television as a platform for artists from 1984 until 1990 (Ćurčić 2007). In addition, the early 1980s initially witnessed important innovations at the newly established Channel 4 in Britain (Born 2003). For example, the channel's celebrated *Workshop* program supported formally and politically challenging work by groups such as Black Audio Film Collective and Sankofa. But, with the rise of a neoliberal economy, the deregulation of many European broadcasting environments, and increased competition for audiences and advertising since the 1990s, resources for art–television exchanges seemed to decline (Wyver 2009).

Yet, rather than charting the gradual withdrawal of art and artists from television, this chapter identifies an altered context for collaboration between museums and broadcasters, and examines a range of new developments in the commissioning, curating, and programming of TV-themed exhibitions and artworks. The specific examples discussed here should be understood in relation to a broader array of strategic development initiatives that have brought museums and broadcasters – particularly those dependent on public subvention – into closer proximity, creating the conditions to support both long-term alliances and more short-term informal collaborations. Now that broadcasters seek to operate across an array of platforms and contexts, televisual forms are increasingly encountered in environments that have also served as important settings for contemporary art, ranging from galleries and museums to outdoor screens located in urban centers (Mcquire 2010, 572).

As the age of television has given way to the age of convergent media, TV-themed exhibitions and public programs have persisted, perhaps even proliferated, and in many instances they propose new ways of thinking about television's history and future as a cultural form. In the discussion that follows I emphasize the important role played by television in the transformation of organizational and institutional structures developed at the Long Beach Museum of Art during the 1970s and 1980s. Informed by Gloria Sutton's research, I argue that the LBMA's engagement with cable TV production and distribution was animated and shaped by questions over the future of the museum as cultural and social institution, which were posed by artists (such as Nam June Paik) as well as by the museum's own curators. Furthermore, I argue that television returned, during the early 2000s, as an important reference point for a number of smaller, explicitly self-critical European art institutions seeking to reconfigure the social and cultural function and organizational form of the art museum.

The era of expansion: Television at Long Beach Museum of Art

In recent years, LBMA has been recognized as one of the first art institutions to fully embrace the role of the museum as TV producer (Sutton 2011). Founded in the 1950s, and located in a building that was formerly a private home, LBMA's relatively small gallery spaces were well suited to the screening of single-channel monitor works and it was one of the first US museums to establish a video art department (set up in 1974) staffed by specialists such as David A. Ross and, subsequently, Kathy Rae Huffman (1976–1983). The museum's initial involvement with cable television occurred in May 1977, with a performance event called *Douglas Davis: Two Cities, A Text, Flesh, and the Devil*, held simultaneously in Santa Monica and San Francisco. During this period, staff at the museum advised on the development of a new building, which was initially supposed to include a cable television studio facility as part of its infrastructure (Huffman 2011, 13). This facility was partly inspired by Ross's experience of working at the independent video studio Art/Tapes/22 in Florence (Italy), but the plans for a new building at Long Beach were ultimately shelved, prompting his departure as curator.

In 1980 the existing LBMA video studio was upgraded to broadcast quality with assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Two years later, the museum collaborated with various US universities to produce *The Arts for Television*, a three-hour, one-off live cable TV program, linking artists in New York, Long Beach, and Iowa City, and featuring contributions from curators such as John Hanhardt and Barbara London and artists such as Nancy Buchanan, Chris Burden, Jaime Davidovich, Mike Kelley, and Michael Smith. Around this time, the museum also hosted a conference called *Shared Realities*, which brought artists, curators, and the developers of new cable TV services together to explore the future of "art as TV." The conference was followed by the LBMA's first regular cable TV show, also called *Shared Realities* (1983) and, during the 1980s, LBMA also established (with the support of the local cable industry) a television production grant program for California-based video artists called Open Channels. This program ran from 1986 until 1995 and it included cable operators, artists, and curators as jurors (Huffman 2011, 17–18). The museum also produced an 18 part series of short works by video artists called *Video Viewpoints* (1987–1989) and arts television programs such as *Art Off the Wall* and *Arts Revue* for cable. These initiatives were developed alongside a program of exhibitions that often engaged directly with television, including shows such as *Tele-Visions: Channels for Changing TV* (1991), curated by Michael Nash and featuring works by David Lynch and Mark Frost, Martha Rosler and Paper Tiger Television, and Antonio Muntadas.

Reflecting on the significance of LBMA's engagement with television, Gloria Sutton suggests that it was one of several organizations seeking to establish "new institutional models for the collection, preservation, circulation, and exhibition of

visual art during the 1970s and 80s" (2011, 123). But, rather than framing it as "overtly anti-institutional," Sutton notes that the LBMA instead "sought to radically recast the museum itself and expand its reach through television" (123). Sutton also emphasizes that Nam June Paik was a highly influential figure in the development of Ross's concept of the "museum as medium" (Ross, quoted in Sutton 2011, 122).

Television and "new institutions"

David Ross, following Paik, envisaged the museum of the future as a "television channel, among other things" (Sutton 2011, 123), and was interested in television's potential as a means to allow artists to sidestep the infrastructure of the museum and engage with audiences directly. In some respects, this impulse coheres with the wider critique of art institutions advocated by many artists and curators, a critique that has continued to unfold in a variety of forms since at least the 1970s. In a valuable analysis of institutional critique and its legacies, Hito Steyerl (2006) differentiates between various historical moments and theorizes how such strategies might function in relation to a changing conception of the public sphere and altered conditions of labor and production. She argues that the first wave of critique "challenged the authority which had accumulated in cultural institutions within the framework of the nation state." It was, she notes, premised on the view that a cultural institution could operate as a potential public sphere in its own right, a public sphere that was both "implicitly national" and founded on "the model of representative parliamentarism." By the 1990s, however, both the cultural authority vested in the museum and the Fordist economic model on which it had depended could no longer be sustained. Steyerl goes on to chart a subsequent shift in institutional critique, articulated in the symbolic integration of minority constituencies into the museum, through engagement with feminist and postcolonial critiques of representation. Yet she defines this change as primarily symbolic, because social and economic inequalities persisted in the structure and organization of many art institutions.

Paralleling aspects of Steyerl's account, Simon Sheikh has highlighted the fragmentation of public spheres and markets, and the museum's attendant loss of cultural authority, in the late twentieth century. He emphasizes that the bourgeois subject, integral to the concept of the public sphere, was historically constituted through "interlinked process of self-representation and self-authorization" and so cannot be understood in isolation from its "cultural self-representation as a public" (Sheikh 2004). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, museums, academies, newspapers, and journals all played a key role in this process, allowing the bourgeois public to become *visibly* present to itself. In the era of post-public fragmentation, however, these traditional modes of bourgeois self-representation have changed, displaced by what Sheikh (2004) describes as a neoliberal discourse of

"consumer groups, as segments of a market with particular demands and desires to be catered to, and to be commodified." Steyerl (2006), who is more specifically focused on practices of artistic production, argues that critique has been symbolically integrated into the institution, or rather "on the surface of the institution without any material consequences within the institution itself or its organisation." Steyerl's point is that, while many art museums began to perform and display criticality, the conditions of labor for those engaged in this performance – such as artists and independent curators – are increasingly precarious. Here she is referring in part to the pervasiveness of commissioning practices that require artists to work very closely with institutions, sometimes operating as designers, facilitators, or mediators of institutional objectives.

Steyerl's third phase of critique coincides with a development in European curatorial and museum practice that has been theorized elsewhere as "new institutionalism" (Doherty 2004). This term is used to describe a move away from the exhibition as the primary medium of curatorial inquiry and practice, and a shift toward participatory and discursive activities, sometimes supported by artistic research in the form of commissions and residencies. Writing in 2004, Claire Doherty identified new institutionalism as "the buzzword of current European curatorial discourse," describing it as "a field of curatorial practice, institutional reform and critical debate concerned with the transformation of art institutions from within." Several of these so-called new institutions relied heavily on publishing and media production (in a variety of physical and virtual forms) to document and disseminate information on their activities. Surveying these publishing initiatives in an article for *Frieze*, Alex Farquharson cites an array of newspapers and magazines, and also identifies three specific examples of "in-house television as art work and curatorial medium" (2006, 157) at various European art institutions. They include Arteleku TV, an online platform developed from 2003 until the late 2000s by the arts center Arteleku in Donostia/San Sebastián, northern Spain, and an array of webcasting projects realized by the Danish artists' group Superflex as part of their Superchannel project, with institutions such as Rooseum in Malmö, Sweden (2001–2002).

Unlike the other examples identified by Farquharson, the CAC TV project produced by the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius, Lithuania (2004–2007) was devised not for the web but rather for transmission on commercial television, and developed in response to a proposition from a Lithuanian broadcaster (Figure 6.1). It was led by Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) curator Raimundas Malasauskas, whose approach was informed by the earlier work of artists such as Andy Warhol and Chris Burden, among others (CAC TV 2004). CAC TV programs were transmitted on the Lithuanian commercial channel TV1, at 11 p.m. on Wednesday evenings, over a three-year period, with episodes also available for viewing on the CAC website. In a text titled "Public CAC TV Draft Concept," the producers list a number of goals, which include "creating a TV genre that does not exist yet in Lithuanian television, developing critical skills of [the] TV audience, deconstructing fundamentals of

FIGURE 6.1 Poster for CAC TV, 2004.
Courtesy of Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius. Designer: Povilas Utovka.

intellectual infotainment, exploring the field of open-source (reality) programming and self-regulation [through the] genre of the Reality meta-show" (CAC TV 2004). This "meta-show" was to be broadcast monthly, with more frequent transmissions of artists' film and video.

In addition to these web and broadcast projects, some of the so-called new institutions explored aspects of televisual form in exhibition-making. *Telling Histories: An Archive and Three Case Studies* (October 11–November 23, 2003), curated by Maria Lind, Søren Grammel, and Ana Paula Cohen at Kunstverein München, set out to examine three highly controversial exhibitions presented at the Kunstverein since 1970: *Poetry Must Be Made by All! Transform the World!* (1970), *Dove Sta Memoria* (Where is memory) by Gerhard Merz (1986), and *Eine Gessellschaft des geschmacks* (A society of taste) by Andrea Fraser (1993). The *Telling Histories* show featured an archive of material relating to these three "case studies," assembled and presented by artist Mabe Bethonico, and included catalogs, press clippings, and exhibition files, with contracts, lists of works, and letters accessible via a computer. This archival material also formed the basis for three public discussions staged in the manner of a television talk show, within an environment designed by Liam Gillick. As evidenced by the video documentation, the set was relatively simple, with the guests seated on either side of the host, on a raised platform facing the audience.

Grammel, who originated the talk show component of *Telling Histories*, selected all the guests and also took on the role of host. Several cameras were used, enabling close-ups and reaction shots of guests, and edited video recordings of the "show" were subsequently presented for viewing on monitors installed in the gallery. Reflecting on this project some years later, Grammel (2011) argued that the talk show format was especially relevant to the Munich context, because of "its saturated TV- and tabloid-based boulevard mentality," noting that he "chose the talk show as a metaphor for the phantom of mediation in general – or, to put it differently – a metaphor for the promises of the mediation industry." Implicitly, the exhibition is framed by Grammel as space in which visitors can perform and display their awareness of the constructedness of television and what he terms the "mediation industry." So, while the producers of CAC TV specifically sought to pose questions about practices of television production and consumption in Lithuania, the curators of the *Telling History* used the talk show format as a way to comment self-reflexively on the Kunstverein's exploration – and mediation – of its own history.

Art museums after the age of television

Just as art institutions were finding new ways to engage with broadcast structures and formats in the early 2000s, artists and independent curators were beginning to contest television's status as a dominant cultural form, as evidenced by the online project *TV Swansong*. Curated by UK-based artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie in

2002, *TV Swansong* consisted entirely of newly commissioned works – including one by Pope and Guthrie – devised to be experienced as a live webcast on a specific date (Graham and Cook 2010, 225). Reviewing *TV Swansong* for *Frieze* magazine, Dan Fox (2002) interpreted the title as a somewhat grandiose reference to "television's last gasp, a final act set in the digital heartland of its nemesis, the Internet," before going on to list numerous technical hiccups, suggesting that *TV Swansong*'s embrace of the Internet might have been somewhat premature. Noting that the project was promoted as a critical reflection on "the current state of television," Fox identifies "nostalgia" as pervasive in early 2000s television production and reception, and concludes that many of the artists involved in *TV Swansong* failed to offer a meaningful counterpoint to this dominant mode. Significantly, Fox also questions the notion, reiterated in publicity for *TV Swansong*, that web-based and TV-themed artist-curated projects are inherently more "democratic" or "accessible" than those realized by conventional art institutions. His analysis suggests that, for Pope and Guthrie, television remained strongly linked to notions of public service and access, which continue to be symbolically potent even in the post-broadcast era.

TV Swansong was also revisited in a subsequent exhibition, *Broadcast Yourself*, co-curated by Sarah Cook and Kathy Rae Huffman, and first presented at the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, within the context of the city's annual AV Festival, which explores intersections between art, society, and technology. The 2008 edition of the festival engaged directly with the spread of Web 2.0 technologies, including social media that enable a form of "self-broadcasting" such as YouTube and Facebook. Although interested in contemporary social practices of media sharing, Cook and Huffman specifically aimed to situate these practices in relation to histories of artistic production and activism, by drawing attention to a range of artworks from the 1970s and 1980s devised for broadcast contexts, including a number of canonical works. They included Chris Burden's *TV Commercials* (1973–1977), a series of four separately realized video works featuring the artist as performer and broadcast during commercial breaks (following the artist's purchase of airtime), and Bill Viola's *Reverse Television* (1983–1984), which depicts individual TV viewers apparently "looking back" at television. The exhibition also featured newly commissioned works, including several that explored self-promotional practices typically associated with social media, such as *The Fantasy A-List Generator* (2008) by Active Ingredient (Rachel Jacobs/Matt Watkins), which consisted of a video booth in which members of the public took on the personality of a celebrity and were interviewed in this role in a live webcast.

By including documentation of earlier TV-themed curatorial projects such as *TV Swansong*, *Broadcast Yourself* underscored the continued significance of the gallery as a site for the ordering of relations between art and television, most notably through material strategies of exhibition design and display. The show included a viewing environment, which was described in documentation as the "living room installation," featuring a patterned rug, curtains, electrical fire, potted plant, coffee table, couch, and CRT (cathode ray tube) television. This environment was used to

display several single-channel works, including Burden's *TV Commercials*. Cook and Huffman also drew attention to the social and material architecture of the TV studio through their installation of *The Amarillo News Tapes* (1980) by Doug Hall, Chip Lord, and Jody Procter, a work produced during a residency undertaken by the artists and organized by Hall at KVII-TV (Channel 7) in Amarillo, Texas, in 1979. The three artists worked in collaboration with local news reporters and anchorman Dan Garcia to explore forms of news gathering and presentation practices, with a particular emphasis on theatrical style and ritual. In addition to displaying the video documentation of this project, Cook and Huffman worked with the AV Festival and Cornerhouse to produce a full-size replica of the KVII-TV news desk, which was spot-lit and raised above floor level on a low, carpeted dais. This replica underscored the theatrical quality of the news production and presentation environment, while at the same time clearly differentiating the gallery from the web as an exhibition space.

Since the mid-2000s, curators have continued to explore the history and significance of television as a cultural form, as evidenced by exhibitions such as *Are You Ready for TV?*, curated by Chus Martinez at MACBA, Barcelona (2010–2011), and *Remote Control* at the ICA, London (2011) (Figure 6.2). *Are You Ready for TV?* was

FIGURE 6.2 Installation view of *Remote Control*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2012.
Photo: Mark Blower.

structured around a series of 10 thematic selections, including "The Empty Podium," exploring the presence of philosophy on French television; "Dead Air: That Dreaded Silence," featuring works that show aspects of television usually hidden such as *TVTV Looks at the Oscars* (TVTV, 1976); "Site-Specific Television," featuring canonical broadcast artworks by David Hall, among others; and "What's My Line?," dealing with themes of mediated identity through reference to the work of Warhol, Judith Barry, and Chip Lord. Each thematic selection proposed a conceptual framework that might be used to understand the changing relationship between art and television. The vast majority of works included in the show were produced before 2000, but the project did encompass a new multipart commission by Albert Serra entitled *Els noms de Crist* (2010), shot in the spaces of the museum, exhibited as an installation, and made temporarily accessible online.

Within the gallery spaces, each of the 10 selections was assigned its own specific environment, and video works were displayed on huge glass-fronted television monitors; on smaller, flat and touch screen monitors, with headphones attached; or on monitors embedded in the gallery walls. Lighting and seating arrangements were used in some of these environments to suggest specific modes of sociality, which are variously associated with the classroom, the television studio, and (less obviously) the private home. The overall aesthetic was much more clinical than that of *Broadcast Yourself*, with extensive use of white plastic chairs throughout. At MACBA, the "TV studio" environment was also quite different from the replica presented in *Broadcast Yourself*, both because it lacked a retro aesthetic and because it did not actually incorporate a studio set. Instead, at MACBA the banks of raked seating facing the large screen and the prominent suspended lighting alluded more generally to the physical and social architecture of the studio, as a setting in which TV production processes could potentially be observed by an audience.

The large television monitors used throughout *Are You Ready for TV?* also tended to dominate the galleries, and the combination of reflective surfaces and high contrast lighting found in several environments created significant barriers to viewing, so that visitors seated in front of these screens were often confronted with their own reflected images. This does not mean that the exhibition design asserted a traditional hierarchical relation between art and television, framing the museum as a site of order and critique. Instead, the evocation of the classroom in the design of the MACBA show seemed highly self-conscious, almost parodic, as though questioning whether the museum could legitimately fulfill a pedagogical role in relation to television, while at the same time fully acknowledging television's *own* neglected history of critique and experimentation.

While the MACBA show highlighted the *cultural* specificity of television as a context and setting for artistic exploration, the ICA show focused attention on technological, infrastructural, and material aspects of broadcasting. Even though *Remote Control* was considerably smaller in scale than *Are You Ready for TV?*, in terms of the number of works exhibited, it nonetheless incorporated an expansive program of performances and talks, entitled "Television Delivers People,"

including several events devised for web streaming. In addition, the ICA show was specifically scheduled to coincide with a significant moment in the history of British television broadcasting: the commencement in the London region of the United Kingdom's switchover from an analogue to a digital signal. Perhaps as a consequence of this context, *Remote Control* was also distinguished by a particularly strong emphasis on technological obsolescence and televisual materiality, in relation to both broadcast infrastructure and TV as a consumer object.

This emphasis was especially apparent in the lower gallery, a section of the exhibition designed and curated by the artist Simon Denny in collaboration with ICA curator Matt Williams. This space featured Denny's installation *Channel 4 Analogue Broadcasting Hardware from Arqiva's Sudbury Transmitter* (2012). This hardware installation did not bear an obvious relationship to "television" in its consumer form, consisting instead of a large bank of machinery incorporating dials, gauges, and other analogue display devices, contained in various equipment cabinets placed in a row, with several doors opened to reveal circuitry. A gallery information sheet framed this installation as an exploration of "questions surrounding spatial distribution and ecology," while also noting a visual resemblance between the older hardware and newer technologies that will "ultimately replace it – namely the vast data storage stacks owned by companies such as Google and Facebook." Denny also contributed a wall-mounted sculpture, *Analogue/Digital Transmission Switchover: London* (2012), incorporating a 3D flat screen television and artificial eyeballs, comically alluding to "advancements" in television technology.

The lower gallery also featured a series of 18 identical wall-mounted video monitors, each displaying a single-channel work produced since the late 1960s. Several of these works were originally devised for broadcast, including Gerry Schum's *Fernsehgalerie/TV Gallery: Land Art* (1968–1969), David Hall's *TV Interruptions* (1971) and *This Is a Television Receiver* (1976), and Dara Birnbaum and Dan Graham's *Local TV News Analysis* (1980). Many of these videos are well known – even iconic – examples of artists' television, which also featured in several of the exhibitions already cited. But, placed in proximity to Denny's hardware installation and sculpture, the display proved especially effective in highlighting television's mutable materiality.

Hall's *This Is a Television Receiver* (1976), one of the iconic videos shown at *Remote Control*, was originally commissioned by the BBC as an unannounced opening work for their special *Arena* video art program, first transmitted on March 10, 1976. At the outset, BBC news presenter Richard Baker delivers a didactic text on illusionism in television production, culminating in the statement "This is a television receiver." Using analogue means, the statement was rerecorded several times, so that the image is progressively distorted. Since the curvature of the television screen also becomes more apparent (Cubitt 2006), Hall's work emphasizes both the material properties of the receiver and its function within a larger institutional formation. Although devised to be viewed on a domestic television receiver, Hall's work is

conventionally exhibited in gallery spaces on a museum-standard Hantarex or Sony "cube" monitor with CRT. The wall-mounted monitors used at the ICA to display video works such as *This Is a Television Receiver* were, however, much smaller than standard museum cube monitors and, although they incorporated CRTs, they also loosely resembled computer screens commonly used in office environments. Consequently they did not physically resemble the type of "receiver" actually used by Hall in the production of his video work, lacking the subtle curvature integral to his progressive distortion of the image. Through the presentation of *This Is a Television Receiver* on this nonstandard monitor, in proximity to the display of obsolete hardware, *Remote Control* drew attention to television's complex (and continually shifting) status as commodity object, medium, and institution.

Remote Control also highlighted interdependencies between art and media economies, with regard to the generation of publicity. The exhibition's event program, titled "Television Delivers People," included a project by London-based art group LuckyPDF (James Early, John Hill, Ollie Hogan, and Yuri Pattison), known for their use of television formats to explore, and sometimes amplify, the promotional character of art discourse. Their previous works include a "TV show" produced for the Frieze Art Fair in 2011, featuring 50 artists who were invited to show and produce new work. More recently, LuckyPDF have developed the parodic "School of Global Art," which promises (according to the project website) to take students "on a journey to the cusp of a new era in learning." "School of Global Art" was launched during a program of talks and events accompanying *Remote Control*. An "enrolment booth" in the ICA gallery offered membership and a "welcome pack of essays" to prospective students in exchange for their personal data.

The event also included a publicity stunt organized by LuckyPDF and involving reality TV star Chloe Sims, from *The Only Way Is Essex* (2010), famous for her plastic surgery and extravagant lifestyle (Figure 6.3). Sims was led on a tour of the *Remote Control* show, and her response to works by artists such as Michelangelo Pistoletto were duly reported in promotional coverage of the event:

> It's something that I'm interested in as in my day-to-day work I have to negotiate reality and created fictions. [The Pistoletto work] is also a mirror, both for the viewer and as a metaphor, it's both art and I can check my make-up in it, and that is very practical. (Phaidon 2012)

The exhibition tour with Sims should not be interpreted as a critique of reality TV or of celebrity culture in general. Instead, it functions more specifically as a commentary on the changing form and function of publicity within the contemporary art economy. LuckyPDF does not distinguish between art fairs and publicly funded art galleries as institutional sites, or seek to operate "outside" publicity-driven media industries. Instead its work is concerned with practices of symbolic exchange between art and media economies, and with changing modes of publicity. In an analysis of the relationship between the art market and celebrity culture, Isabelle

FIGURE 6.3 LuckyPDF's James Early and Chloe Sims at *Remote Control*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2012. (For a color version of this figure, please see the color plate section.)
Photo: Victoria Erdelevskaya. Courtesy of LuckyPDF and Institute of Contemporary Arts.

Graw (2009, 32) notes the historically important role played by "symbol-bearers" such as art historians, critics, and curators. These privileged producers of knowledge contribute to the generation of symbolic – and consequently market – value (Graw 2009, 23). According to Graw, however, lifestyle and fashion magazines have begun, in recent decades, to rival established symbol-bearers in the designation of contemporary art's symbolic value. She finds evidence of this in the prevalence of lists in art and lifestyle publications, in which critics rank their favorite artists or exhibitions (2009, 43). These modes of publicity meet the demand for clear hierarchies, but rarely offer any reflection on criteria for inclusion or exclusion. As her analysis makes clear, value is not simply bestowed by museums, but rather produced through a complex and fluid exchange of publicities, involving art institutions and lifestyle-oriented media.

Broadcast form in public programming

Some art institutions have, however, deliberately sought to dissociate themselves from celebrity- and lifestyle-oriented culture by appropriating modes of rational-critical discourse that are historically associated with current affairs and news

media. These discursive modes are routinely valorized and defended by some theorists of media and culture because they are thought to play an important role in the ongoing formation of the public sphere, while others entirely reject the notion that television audiences can ever function as a public. According to Sonia Livingstone, value-laden distinctions tend to persist between televisual audiences and publics, despite significant changes in technologies and practices of media consumption. Livingstone notes that publics and audiences are often thought to be "mutually opposed," in part because "'public' implies an orientation to collective and consensual action, perhaps even requires that action to be effective for a public to be valued" (2005, 17). She notes that "in both popular and elite discourses, audiences are denigrated as trivial, passive, individualized, while publics are valued as active, critically engaged and politically significant," with face-to-face communication often judged as inferior to mediated communication (2005, 18).

Livingstone argues for a rethinking of the distinction between audience and public, within a "media and communications environment characterized both by the mediation of publics and the participation of audiences" (2005, 17). For example, she identifies talk shows as especially ambiguous objects, because they often involve expert discussion of topical issues in public, yet "is often taken as representing the antithesis of rational public debate" (2005, 20). An opposition between audience and public also finds expression in curatorial projects such as *Telling Histories* and in more recent public programming initiatives developed by the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. While it is not a new institution in the sense already discussed, the Hammer Museum has nonetheless sought to review and revise aspects of its institutional structure during the 2000s, and to reconfigure its relationship to its audience, which includes a considerable number of local residents.

I am especially interested in the role played by broadcasting in the museum's ongoing series of current affairs themed talks entitled the Hammer Forum, which consists of a series of public discussions, usually held monthly in the museum's Billy Wilder Theater, focusing on topical issues such as environmental concerns, gay marriage, and the role of commercial media in the democratic political process.[2] Admission is free and the discussions (which are also webcast and archived online) typically involve presentations by one or two speakers, followed by questions from the audience. The Forum is moderated by the journalist and broadcaster Ian Masters, host of the radio show *Background Briefing*, which deals primarily with political issues and is broadcast on KPFK 90.7 FM. It is a listener-supported (as opposed to advertising-dependent) radio station that forms part of the left-leaning California-based Pacifica Radio network. Masters' long-standing experience as a radio host is strongly emphasized in the Hammer Museum's publicity for the Forum, and he is often introduced at the start of the discussions as a BBC-trained journalist, an association that seems symbolically as well as professionally significant because of the BBC's history and international prominence as a public service

broadcaster. Masters and Claudia Bestor (Director of Public Programs at the Hammer) work together on the identification of possible speakers, who are usually confirmed several months in advance of the Forum event, and a news-related theme is often explored over a series of public sessions.

It is worth noting that the origins of the Hammer Forum lie partly in the huge public attention generated by a public talk delivered by Gore Vidal in March 2003, prior to the US bombing of Iraq (Sheets 2004). Following this event, museum staff recognized that there was a local interest in discursive events focusing explicitly on politics. But, as the museum is not a broadcaster or social media website, newsworthy material can actually result in costs to the institution, since they are charged by their server for very large volumes of downloading prompted by events dealing with controversial or highly topical issues. So the program promotes in-depth exploration of issues that fall within the territory of current affairs but are not necessarily headline news. The 2011–2012 program, for example, included several sessions on the theme of the "American Dream" as well as a session on November 19, 2011, entitled "Political Persuasion," addressing the role of demographic research in the 2012 US presidential election campaign. It featured two "veteran campaign strategists," both of whom critiqued the divisive, and often highly emotive, use of television advertising in recent election campaigns.

The Hammer Museum does not currently gather detailed demographic information on the Forum attendees, but anecdotal evidence offered by museum staff suggests that events attract a mix of museum members, listeners to Ian Masters' radio show, UCLA students, and also specific interest groups targeted by the Public Program staff in relation to specific issues. Forum events are ticketed but free and attendees receive a calendar detailing forthcoming exhibitions and public programs. Since 2011, the Hammer's communications department has also produced a short presentation about the museum's activities, which plays in the theater before the discussion begins. Surprisingly, however, there is no attempt to directly link the Forum topics with the exhibition or event calendar. Instead, Bestor emphasizes that the aim of the event is to offer a physical space for audiences, most of them LA residents, to engage with each other and to pose unscripted questions on current issues to experts, such as policymakers. So, even though Forum events are webcast, and legitimated through reference to internationally situated broadcast institutions (such as the BBC), the Hammer Forum clearly reiterates the significance of the museum as a localized space of social gathering and public visibility. In terms of its content, the Hammer Forum seems to address directly many of the problems of social and political participation posed by the fragmentation and segmentation of the bourgeois public sphere, also highlighted in exhibitions such as *Telling Histories*. But, rather than engaging with the form of the entertainment TV talk show, the Hammer Forum invokes the authority and seriousness of a current affairs public radio show, a form of broadcasting that enjoys a relatively high cultural status and legitimacy within the United States.

Television production and contemporary art commissioning

In addition to curatorially led projects and public programming initiatives engaging with televisual form, art institutions have also played host in recent decades to numerous commissioned works realized through collaborations between artists and TV producers. In some instances these collaborations have resulted in works intended exclusively for gallery exhibition but others have extended into broadcast and online platforms. For example, the props and sets of the primetime television soap *Melrose Place* served as the focus of a three-year (1995–1998) art project realized by GALA Committee, the name given to a collaboration between the artist Mel Chin, students and faculty at the University of Athens, Georgia ("GA") and the California Institute of the Arts ("LA"), and the show's producers and set decorator. Reflecting on this project in 2000, Yilmaz Dziewior notes that Chin worked with a network of 102 artists and "persuaded Spelling Entertainment Group … to grant them a contract to provide the program with more than 150 props over the course of two seasons" (2000, 193). These prop objects often included imagery or textual material relating to social or political themes raised obliquely (but rarely addressed directly) in *Melrose Place* plotlines, including environmental concerns, global conflict, crime and violence, and gender and sexual health issues.

This project was not initiated as a critique of *Melrose Place* but rather devised as a more open-ended exploration of television culture and discourse. Unlike an earlier generation of artists seeking to present themselves as innovators or critics, Chin and the GALA Committee did not frame their project as an attempt to question or to reform established modes of television production. Instead, the artists, students, and television workers involved in this collaboration were motivated by a shared interest in a range of social and political causes, which they perceived as highly significant. Although the additions and alterations to the show's sets were intended to be unobtrusive, the project was premised on the notion that some viewers would become curious about the unusual objects visible on screen. Perhaps recognizing the limitations of this approach, GALA Committee members also experimented with mediation strategies that could operate in tandem with the existing *Melrose Place* fan culture. In 1996 the project expanded to include an online component – a website designed around a fictional fan called "Eliza," whose homepage included speculative commentary about the odd objects appearing on the show, with the aim of arousing the interest of real fans. It is not clear, however, if this strategy succeeded, and the online archive of the GALA Committee websites (initially maintained by the Carsey-Wolf Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara) is no longer active.

It is important to note that the GALA Committee project developed as the result of a museum commission. The collaboration was initiated by Chin in response to an invitation extended in 1995 by curators at the Geffen Contemporary, MOCA,

Los Angeles, to produce work for the exhibition *Uncommon Sense*, planned for 1997. The exhibition focused on the theme of social interaction and consisted of six newly commissioned works by artists committed to engaging public interaction. At MOCA, the GALA Committee presented *In the Name of the Place*, an installation featuring a Melrose-style set complete with a selection of objects and videos of several episodes. These works were subsequently auctioned with the aim of generating funds (and publicity) for nonprofit organizations associated with the various social issues highlighted by the project. According to Dziewior, "GALA Committee not only influenced the design of the props but also, over time, had a subtle effect on aspects of the series' plot development," as both the auction and the *Uncommon Sense* opening at MOCA were incorporated into the TV show (2000, 193–194).

While the GALA Committee project remains distinctive, as a long-term collaboration between artists and television workers elaborated across the contexts of museum, broadcast TV series, and Internet, several other artists have collaborated with television producers on the realization of installation works for specific exhibition contexts, including Katya Sander, *Televised I: The Anchor, the I and the Studio* (2006); Liz Magic Laser, *In Camera* (2012); and Gerard Byrne, *A Man and a Woman Make Love* (2012). My next example involves a collaboration between an artist and the entire cast and crew of a telenovela produced by the Mexican commercial broadcaster Televisa. Christian Jankowski's *Crying for the March of Humanity* is a reproduction of an episode of the Televisa show *La que no podía amar* (The one who could not love) shot side by side with the original, using the same actors, crew, locations, sets, and scenarios, and adhering to the standard production and post-production approaches. The only difference between the production of the original episode and Jankowski's version is that the artist instructed the actors not to speak any of their lines, but rather to remain mute and communicate only by means of dramatic emotional outbursts, primarily crying. During filming, the actors could hear the script through hidden earphones,[3] so they could synchronize the timing of their tears with the dialogue in the original episode.

The end result is at times comical but also emotionally engaging, largely on account of the performances. Many of the actors visibly struggle to hold back their words and to "speak" with their eyes and their tears, and the episode includes a large number of close-ups (using the standard techniques of shot reverse shot, with careful eyeline matches), underscoring the importance of gesture in melodrama. Even though the episode is drawn from the midpoint of the telenovela serial, and is presented without contextualizing information about characters or the storyline, it is possible to speculate with some degree of certainty on the main aspects of the plot. The setting is a lavishly furnished villa, and the narrative appears to revolve around a wealthy man, a husband and father, who is so traumatized by his inability to walk (he is pictured in a wheelchair) that he cannot love his wife and child. The video was produced for exhibition in the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, a museum located in the former home and studio of the artist David

Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974) in Mexico City. Its title refers specifically to the latter's monumental mural work *La marcha de la humanidad* (The march of humanity, 1965–1971), proposing a relationship between the telenovela and mural forms in terms of the use of gesture.

Crying for the March of Humanity is not the first work by Jankowski to borrow from commercial television, and he has often utilized reality TV formats (particularly the makeover genre) to structure scenarios in which art world conventions are observed by outsiders, sometimes to comic effect. Jankowski has also devised makeover projects that require the participation of art workers as well as TV performers. In *The Perfect Gallery* (2010), for example, he "hired" interior designer Gordon Whistance, known for appearances on the home improvement show *Changing Rooms* (1996–2004), to speedily renovate the Pump House Gallery in South London, in preparation for his forthcoming solo show. The exchanges between the designer and the gallery director suggest (somewhat unconvincingly) that Whistance is unaware of the fact that the empty gallery will be the artwork and the video is structured so as to resemble a conventional makeover show, following the designer as he conducts perfunctory research on galleries and agonizes over his miniscule budget and impending deadline.

Jankowski has also produced works that involve a broadcast component, such as *Tableaux Vivant TV* (2010), which consists of a series of short location reports conducted by television journalists covering preparations for the Sydney Biennale. These reports functioned as publicity for the exhibition but, instead of featuring the usual TV-friendly action shots, they incorporated live *tableaux vivants*, in which key players in the Biennale, such as the artist, the administrative team, and the artistic director David Elliot, were depicted in a moment of artificial stillness. As their cameras move around these highly theatrical scenes, the TV presenters attempt to verbally inject a sense of excitement and animation that is entirely absent from the on-screen image.

In one sequence Jankowski is depicted sitting alone looking out to sea, frozen in a moment of highly choreographed reflection, while the cameras look on and the TV presenter speculates about his innermost thoughts and hopes. At another moment, the television cameras move through a production office in which the administrators and curators involved in the realization of the Biennale are also frozen in motion. This sequence is particularly significant in that it requires the (presumably already overworked) production staff to perform in yet another capacity, helping to realize an artwork by pausing their usual activity. So the project offered a view of action behind the scenes, in keeping with the conventions of news coverage of major cultural events, but presented these scenes as highly choreographed. In contrast to *The Perfect Gallery*, which closely follows the conventions of reality TV transformation-themed shows, *Tableaux Vivant TV* is both unsettling and formally distinctive. By choreographing and artificially pausing the action that serves as the content of each reportage sequences, Jankowski both makes explicit and subtly confounds the conventional strategies used to publicize artistic and curatorial work.

Conclusion: Coproduction, partnership, and publicity

Jankowski's work, like that of LuckyPDF, utilizes televisual modes of production and publicity to articulate a position within, rather than outside, the celebrity-driven cultural economy that is analyzed by Isabelle Graw. Art institutions such as the Hammer Museum seem to articulate a different position in relation to this economy, through initiatives such as the Hammer Forum, which appropriate the self-consciously rational discursive form of current affairs journalism. In conjunction with its public programs, however, the Hammer has also commissioned artworks that are more obviously indebted to celebrity- and lifestyle-oriented culture, as evidenced by the exhibition *Hammer Projects: My Barbarian* in 2010–2011. This show featured a six-part video work, *The Night Epi$ode* (2010), commissioned from the artists' group My Barbarian. It was inspired by the 1970s anthology series *Rod Serling's Night Gallery*, which opened each week with the host wandering through a museum at night. In *The Night Epi$ode*, My Barbarian explore a variety of surreal and supernatural situations loosely linked by a focus on labor, exploitation, economic marginalization, and competition. The pilot episode, for example, features a group of "curators" locked inside a room, evaluating a succession of works in which artists seek to attract attention through bizarre and self-destructive strategies. According to the press release, in this work "the arts become a stand-in for the equalizing force of a bad economy. Everyone is struggling, has been violated, or has sacrificed … artists have vanished, imprisoned themselves, become vampires" (Hammer Museum 2010).

Clearly, television's current and historical forms now serve as an important resource, even a repertoire, for artists seeking to articulate and analyze their position within the contemporary economy of self-exploitation. Yet it would be a mistake to categorize museums and art institutions exclusively as spaces for the interrogation of this economy. Instead, it might be more accurate to position the art museum within an economy of commercial coproduction, in which art institutions are often the weaker partner. Here I am thinking of the role played by Brooklyn Museum in the production and promotion of the art-themed reality TV show broadcast by the US cable and satellite channel Bravo, *Work of Art: The Next Great Artist*. Launched in 2010, and developed by the actress Sarah Jessica Parker's production company Pretty Matches, in conjunction with the reality TV producer Magical Elves, *Work of Art* focuses on the "discovery" and promotion of artists in the early stages of their careers. Unlike music- or dance-based reality TV contests, art-themed shows tend *not* to be organized around viewer participation and voting. Instead, the focus is primarily on judgments and evaluations performed by art world insiders, and on endorsements by established art institutions such as museums or auction houses.

Presenting its participants (a mix of graduates and artists without formal qualifications) with tasks that are vaguely reminiscent of art school projects, *Work of Art* involves the participation of powerful art world "mentors" such as Simon de Pury, the chair of Phillips de Pury auction house, with equally prominent figures as "judges," such as the influential art critic Jerry Saltz. Participants compete for

$100,000 in prize money and a solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, with the winner selected by a panel that includes the museum's curator. While this association has generated controversy, it has also undoubtedly raised the Brooklyn Museum's profile, and has been defended by the institution's director as the continuation of a venerable tradition of juried competition in the arts (Rosenberg 2010). In the long term, however, this partnership signals a troubling move away from the institutional self-questioning that characterized earlier forays into TV production by publicly funded art institutions and commercial television, extending from the work of the LBMA in the 1970s and 1980s to more recent initiatives. Rather than enabling critical exploration of the Brooklyn Museum's function and future in a celebrity-driven cultural economy, *Work of Art: The Next Great Artist* both exploits and undermines its credibility as a public institution.

As evidenced by this selection of TV-themed art projects, television no longer functions as an emblem of contemporary popular culture. Nonetheless, "television" persists as an object of fascination for artists, curators, and art institutions, perhaps because of its status as (simultaneously) commodity object, medium, and cultural institution. This complexity, or indeterminacy, may help to explain why television has proved important for those seeking to question the traditional function of the museum, whether as a site for the classification and categorization of objects, or as an institution devoted to the narration of history, and to the formation of citizens and publics. Ultimately, the examples drawn together in this chapter demonstrate that television in the museum is very often the focus of contradictory associations and claims, particularly regarding the differences between audiences and publics. Consequently, when transposed to the art institution, TV formats such as talk shows can function as a means to bolster the status of the museum as a public sphere, or as a way to expose the very dissolution of the ideals underpinning this notion of publicness. Even though television has relinquished its cultural dominance to the Internet and social media, it seems likely that these contradictory associations and claims will persist, and continue to shape the relationship between museums and media.

Acknowledgments

My research was supported by a fellowship from the International Research Institute for Cultural Technologies and Media Philosophy, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.

Notes

1 This chapter incorporates material revised from my *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television* (Bristol, UK: Intellect; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), and also from "Televisual Objects: Props, Relics and Prosthetics," *Afterall* 33 (2013): 66–77.

2 My discussion is informed by interviews conducted at the Hammer Museum with Claudia Bestor, Director of Public Programs, and her colleague Camille Thoma, on February 22, 2013.
3 Production details provided by Christian Jankowski in a personal interview on September 12, 2012, during the preview of his exhibition *Monument to the Bourgeois Working Class*, Kosterfelde Gallery, Berlin, September 13–November 3, 2012.

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