

# TURE SJOLANDER

<http://vimeo.com/23311095>

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[1961](#) - **50 ANNIVERSARY** - [2011](#)

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"I am the "architect", mastermind and the sole artist behind the s.c. "pioneering" electronic artworks I created during the 1960's"  
-Ture Sjolander;

## **Light Paintings 1959 -1963**

**"THE ROLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY..." 1964,**

**"TIME" 1965-66,**

**"MONUMENT" 1966-67**

**"SPACE IN THE BRAIN" 1969**

and have since then continuously been artistically working on the very same visual origin/material, and still expanding my creation up-to-date.

Actually, it is a timeless art work in its origin and do not deserve to be described as "history", 40 years later.

A small number of people - "technician's", "artist's", "producer's, and so on... who have assisted me through the years have sometimes made unsubstantial claims to be the "director's", "producer's", "technician's", "artist's" or the original creator's of my works or even said that I was only an insignificant member of a group. After all the acknowledgments and grants I have received, nationally and internationally, and after all the world wide attention in media, I got the last 40 years it is easy to understand certain peoples jealous attitude and some of them are still persistent in making wrongful remarks and malicious slanders about me and my artistic creations.

Thats Life!

**TURE SJOLANDER**

2004

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[1959 - 1963](#)

Oyvind Fahlstrom

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November 2006

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## **A HISTORY of VIDEO ART**

by Chris Meigh-Andrews

**During the period between 1965 and 1975, which could be considered as the defining period of video art, there was significant research activity amongst artists working with video to develop, modify or invent video imaging instruments or synthesizers.**

**The first generation of video artist/engineers include Ture Sjolander, Bror Wikstrom, Lars Weck, Eric Seigel, Stephen Beck, Dan Sandin, Steve Rutt, and Bill and Louise Etra, in addition to the well-documented collaborative work of Nam June Paik and Shuya Abe.**

**The work of these pioneers is important because, in addition to exploring the potential of video as a means of creative expression, they developed a range of relatively accessible and inexpensive image manipulation devices specifically for 'alternative' video practice.**

### **TURE SJOLANDER AND MONUMENT**

**In September 1966 Swedish artists Ture Sjolander ( 1937-, Sweden) and Bror Wikstrom broadcast Time, a 30-minute transmission of electronically manipulated paintings on National Swedish Television. Sjolander and Wikstrom had worked with TV broadcast engineer Bengt Modin to construct a temporary video image synthesizer which was used to distort and transform video line-scan rasters by applying tones from waveform generators. The basic process involved applying electronic distortions during the process of transfer of photographic transparencies and film clips. According to Modin they introduced the electronic transformations using two approaches. The geometric distortion of the scanning raster of the video signal by feeding various waveforms to the scanning coil, and video distortion by the application of various electronic filters to the luminance signal.**

**Sjolander had begun working with broadcast television with the production of his first multimedia experiment The Role of Photography, commissioned by the National Swedish Television in 1964, which was broadcast the following year. With the broadcasting of Time, his second project for Swedish television, Sjolander was well aware of the significance of his work and importance of the artistic statement he was making:**

**Time is the very first video art work televised at that point in time for the reason to produce an historical record as well as an evidence of original visual free art, made with the electronic medium - manipulation of the electronic signal - and exhibited/installed through the television, televised.**

**In 1967, Sjolander teamed up with Lars Weck and, using a similar technological process, produced Monument, a programme of electronically manipulated monochrome images of famous people and cultural icons including the Mona Lisa, Charlie Chaplin, the Beatles, Adolf Hitler and Pablo Picasso. (Separate text of this work as below)**

**This programme was broadcast to a potential audience of over 150 million people in France, Italy Sweden, Germany and Switzerland in 1968, as well later in the USA. Subsequently, Sjolander produced a Space in the Brain (1969) based on images provided by NASA, extending his pioneering electronic imaging television work to include the manipulation and distortion of colour video imagery. A Space in the Brain was an attempt to deal with notions of space, both the inner worldof the brain and the new televisual space created by electronic imaging.**

Sjolander, originally a painter and photographer, had become increasingly dissatisfied with conventional representation as a language of communication and began experimenting with the manipulation of photographic images using graphic and chemical means. For Sjolander, broadcast television represented truly contemporary communication medium that should be adopted as soon as possible by artists - a fluid transformation and constant stream of ideas within the reach of millions.

The televised electronic images Sjolander and his collaborators produced with *Time, Monument and Space in the Brain* were further extended via other means. The television system was exploited as a generator of imagery for further distribution processes including silkscreen printing, posters, record covers, books and paintings that were widely distributed and reproduced, although ironically signed and numbered as if in limited editions.

It seems likely that these pioneering broadcast experiments were influential on the subsequent work of Nam June Paik and others. According to Ture Sjolander, Paik visited Stockholm in the summer of 1966 and was shown still images from *Time* while on a visit to the Elektron Musik Studion (EMS). Additionally, Sjolander is in possession of a copy of a letter dated 12 March 1974 from Sherman Price of Rutt Electrophysics in New York, acknowledging the significance of *Monument* to the history of 'video animation', and requesting detailed information about the circuitry employed to obtain the manipulated imagery. In reply, Bengt Modin, the engineer who had worked with Sjolander, provided Price with a circuit diagram and an explanation of their technical approach to the project, claiming he 'no longer knew the whereabouts of the artists involved'.

### THE PAIK-ABE SYNTHESIZER

The Paik-Abe Synthesizer, built in 1969 is one of the earliest examples of a self-contained video image-processing device. As we have seen, Ture Sjolander and his collaborators had brought together video processing technology in temporary configuration to produce their early broadcast experiments, Paik's synthesizer was a self-contained unit built expressly and exclusively for the purpose. The instrument, or video synthesizer, as it came to be known, enabled the artist to add colour to a monochrome video image, and to distort the conventional TV camera image. -.....

Extending a dialogue that they had begun in Tokyo in 1964, electronic engineer Shuya Abe and Nam June Paik began building a video synthesizer in 1969 at WGBH-TV in Boston, possibly spurred on by the work of Sjolander in Sweden.

from Chris Meigh-Andrews book, *A HISTORY OF VIDEO ART*, Publisher BERG, Oxford-New York. First Edition October 2006

## representative video art works

pages 181, 182 and 183

MONUMENT, TURE SJOLANDER AND LARS WECK (WITH BENGT MODIN), 1967

(BLACK AND WHITE, SOUND, 10 MINUTES. COMMISSIONED AND BROADCAST BY NATIONAL SWEDISH TV, 1968)

*Monument*, characterized by Ture Sjolander as a series of 'electronic paintings' is a free flowing collage of electronically distorted and transformed iconic media images. Set to a similarly improvised jazz and sound effects track, images of pop stars, political and historical celebrities and media personalities, culled from archive film footage and photographic stills have been electronically manipulated - stretched, skewed, exploded, rippled and rotated. The relentless flow of semi-abstracted monochromatic faces and associated sounds seems to both celebrate and satirize the contemporary visual culture of the time. In its fluid mix of visual information it generalizes the television medium, draining it of its specific content and momentary significance. It creates a kind of 'monument' to the ephemeral - all this will pass, as it is passing before you now.

Archive film footage and photographic stills of familiar faces and people, such as Lennon and McCartney, Chaplin, Hitler, the Mona Lisa - the 'monument' of the world culture - flicker and flash, stretch and ooze across the television screen. In some moments the television medium is itself directly referenced, the familiar screen shape presented and rescanned, images of video feedback and, at one point, its vertical roll out of adjustment, anticipate Joan Jonas's seminal tape, although for very different purposes. The work anticipated a number of later videotapes, particularly the distorted iconic images of Nam June Paik.

Gene Youngblood described the psychological power and effect of these transformations in his influential and visionary book *Expanded Cinema* (Youngblood 1970):

Images undergo transformations at first subtle, like respiration, then increasingly violent until little remains of the original icon. In this process, the images pass through thousands of stages of semi-cohesion, making the viewer constantly aware of his orientation to the picture. The transformations occur slowly and with great speed, erasing perspectives, crossing psychological barriers. A figure might stretch like a silly putty or become

rippled in liquid universe. Harsh basrelief effects accentuate physical dimensions with great subtlety, so that one eye or ear might appear slightly unnatural. And finally the image disintegrates into a constellation of shimmering video phosphores.

Sjolander and his collaborators at Sveriges Radio (the Swedish Broadcasting Company) in Stockholm had worked together on a number of related projects since the mid-1960s, beginning with *The Role of Photography*, Sjolander's first experiment with electronic manipulations of the broadcast image in 1965. This project was followed with the broadcast of *Time* (1966), a thirty-minute transmission of 'electronic paintings' produced using the same temporarily configured video image synthesizer that was later used to create *Monument*. The system that Sjolander and his colleagues used involved the transfer of photographic images (film footage and transparencies) to videotape using a 'flying-spot' telecine machine. This process produced electronic images which they transformed and manipulated by applying square and sine signals with a waveform generator during the transfer stage, often using this process repeatedly to apply greater levels of transformation.

For Sjolander and his collaborator Lars Weck, the broadcasting of *Monument* was the epicentre of an extended communication experiment in electronic image-making reaching out to an audience of millions.

Kristian Romare, writing in a book published as part of an extended series of artworks which included publishing, posters, record covers and paintings after the broadcasting of *Monument*, describes the scope of Sjolander and Weck's vision and aspirations for the new image-generating technique they had pioneered: see separate article Sjolander's CV on the Internet. [www.monumentintime.homestead.com/](http://www.monumentintime.homestead.com/)

#### SCAN MODULATION/RESCAN

In this process images are produced using a television camera rescanning an oscilloscope or CRT screen. The display images are manipulated (squeezed, stretched, rotated, etc.) using magnetic or electronic modulation. The manipulated images, rescanned by a second camera are then fed through an image processor. This type of instrument was also used without an input camera feed, the resultant images produced by manipulation of the raster. Examples of this type of instrument include Ture Sjolander's 'Temporary' Video Synthesizer (1966-69), the Paik/Abe Synthesizer, and the Rutt/Etra Scan Processor (1973).

[www.modemtimes.homestead.com/](http://www.modemtimes.homestead.com/)

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## New Media in Late 20th-Century Art

by

Michael Rush

Publisher: Thames & Hudson 1999.

From Chapter 2: Video Art  
Pages: 92, 93.

"Public television stations in the United States and Europe fostered experimentation by allowing access to fully equipped studios. Starting in the late 1960's Boston's public television station, WGBH, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, produced the New Television Workshop under the leadership of Fred Barzyk.

In 1969 six artists (Nam June Paik, Allan Kaprow, Otto Piene, James Seawright, Thomas Tadlock, and Aldo Tambellini) made videotapes using WGBH equipment for a program called "The Medium is the Medium" which aired nationally. This was the widest exposure the new practice of video art had yet received."

"Swedish artists Ture Sjolander, Lars Weck, and Bengt Modin produced *Monument* (1967), a program for experimental television which combined pre-recorded film, slides, and videotapes in a process that distorted images during the transmission of the image from the tape to the television. After seeing these for the first time, historian Gene Youngblood said, 'We see the Beatles, Charlie Chaplin, Picasso, the Mona Lisa, the King of Sweden, and other famous figures distorted with a kind of insane electronic disease.'"

"Many innovations in what later became computer animation were inaugurated by video artists who early on developed electronic imaging techniques."

Michael Rush, 1999.

The following text was written by Ture Sjolander 1973, and again presented as conference-paper at the  
**The World Conference on Culture in Stockholm 1998.**

# TURE SJOLANDER

## ARTISTS' MEDIA

**For the creation of paintings, works of graphic art, free-standing sculptures and reliefs there is a fairly limited number of materials and techniques; these have changed relatively little during the last 300 years.**

**Even though new materials and methods have developed, the artistic techniques in the areas of painting, graphic arts and sculpture have kept their traditional character. A painting on canvas today has a technical structure largely similar to that of a seventeenth century painting.**

**The possibility of giving pictorial expression to the artist's message is however not tied to traditional methods. For the majority of people in the industrial countries, television, video newspapers and advertising have become the dominant transmitters of pictures and visual images. Television and video in particular have come to extend more and more widely through the global development of distribution systems, and are frequently used as a medium for other art forms, such as film, theatre and pictorial arts.**

**In this context it should be emphasised that it is journalists, above all, who have been recruited to these areas and who have therefore had an opportunity of exploiting the particular and specialised resources which television and video have at their disposal. The fact that pictorial artists occupy a subordinate position would seem partly to be connected with the fact that art schools still limit their educational role to the traditional creation of static images.**

## 2. THE CREATION OF ELECTRONIC IMAGES

**The work of artistic/technical development presupposes that artists have access to specialised technical studio equipment.**

**Television has been in existence now for almost 50 years. During this period a significant number of cultural programmes have been made by artists. Very rarely, however, have these artists produced works directly intended/designed for this medium. Although television per se is a pictorial medium, it has primarily been used to transmit words. The stress has been laid on 'tele' or the transporting/transmitting aspects of the medium, and comparatively little attention has been paid to the conceptual element of 'vision'; that is to say those aspects having to do with the language of the images themselves.**

**If one looks back on the history of art and makes comparisons with the visual aesthetics used in television today, one is struck by the fact that the greater proportion of all television production today uses visual aesthetics dating back to the 16th century. As an example we may mention the aesthetics of Cubism: this implied a visualisation of several different points of view being given simultaneous expression and coinciding with the discoveries by modern physics of Time and Space being only relative and not absolutely fixed structures.**

**Cubism dates back more than 50 years, and yet, in a television programme a few years ago it would be unthinkable to use Cubist visual aesthetics.**

### **MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AND COMPUTER COMMUNICATION**

**This situation is however changing rapidly at the present moment. During the last decades or so, a series of international artists have initiated the construction of electronic image laboratories, where they pursue the development of new art forms through experimental techniques.**

**Those international artists who have access to modern electronic technology have been given the opportunity of realising, by a creative process, their ideas concerning a truly visually-oriented language. Artists with many different points of view and modes of expression have begun working with computer/electronics/video, taking their point of departure in their previous knowledge and training. Painters, sculptors, musicians, photographers, composers, choreographers and others have approached this medium with their own particular talents and creative methodology and all have contributed to media development in the area of television film and video and to a visual language characterised by greater awareness and creativity.**

**International electronic music studios have conducted its work of development in music for nearly 30 years, those artists who have been engaged in similar work within the visual arts field are mostly still obliged to manage completely without any corresponding access to electronic equipment.**

**In a number of countries considerable sums have been invested, for many years, in facilities for practical experimentation in both the visual and audio areas.**

### **THE ARTIST AS DESIGN SCIENTIST**

**The creation of electronic images (sometimes called 'video art'), is an artistic development of visual language. Modern 'electronics' can convert sound vibrations into visual structures, and image components into patterns of sound, thereby giving visual expression to basic processes such as growth and change. The essential definition of 'video art' is based on the manipulation of video signals. Apart from the use of video to realise a series of images in a temporal sequence, artists can also exploit television as a physical, sculptural, object. At galleries they make 'installations' or 'environments' by placing one or more monitors or giant screen projections in specific, related positions. Video cameras, too, 'incorporate' the spectator into the work. In this way, it is possible to explore perceptions of what is seen, as well as the psychology of seeing, in a living context.**

**An electronic image laboratory, however, should not be limited to video. Another related area is the so-called computer animation (computer-assisted and/or computer-generated images). This technique is based on advanced forms of programming and opens up hitherto unimagined possibilities of free-image composition.**

**With the aid of electronics and laser the static image, too, will have an interesting development in the fields of painting and graphic arts. Attempts in this direction have been demonstrated in the form of 'video paintings', or more precisely, electronic painting and computer art.**

### **WORD PICTURES**

Those who claim that we live today in a visually oriented culture are probably word-blind. Today's visual art and visual media, with the possible exception of painting, still bear a master-slave relationship to elite literature and popular journalism - in the beginning was the Word. The word is power. People who can express themselves well and forcefully in speech and writing, more or less automatically achieve positions of power... while people who express themselves well in pictures, must often support themselves through stipends and other grants.

The producers of words dominate the cultural columns of newspapers, control official cultural policy and the most important visual media. And generally exert a damnably important influence on society. The arts in Sweden are infested by the speech chorus and the clatter of typewriters. Authors write screenplays and become film directors. Journalists become television producers (or programme directors) and make TV-films. Our entire culture is beset by word-producers. Authors, journalists, investigators, letter-writers, polemicists and critics. Who, in fact, knows anything about pictures? And why do we understand so little about visual semantics? Photography and motion pictures have existed for 100 years, television for 50. Despite this, pictures have not attained more than a purely illustrative function. Why? Probably, because most of our pictures are created by Word-people. In fact, roughly half the items on TV today could just as well be broadcast on radio instead.

Ture Sjölander 1973

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In the short history of video animation the Swedish artists TURE SJOLANDER and BROR WIKSTROM are the pioneers.

Their television art programme ' TIME ' (1965 - 1966) seems to be the first distortion of video-scan-line rasters achieved by applying tones from wave form generators.

For almost ten years they have been using electronic image-making equipment for a non-traditional statement. It must be kept in mind, however that SJOLANDER and WIKSTROM have a traditional and solid artistic background. Howard Klein likens the relationship between the video artist and his hardware to that between Ingres and the graphite pencil. It should be added that real artists like SJOLANDER and WIKSTROM have a natural relationship to any image-making equipment. In that respect they differ from most cameramen and tape makers and they may come back some day as pioneers in other fields of art.

In fact they have already surpassed the limits of video and TV using the electronic hardware to produce pictures which can be applied as prints, wall paintings and tapestries.

They have generously provided new possibilities to other artists, they are not working alone on a monument of their own.

It is significant that the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts has decided to support SJOLANDER and WIKSTROM financially.

## [Professor Dr. Bjorn Hallstrom](#)

Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Art.

Stockholm - 1976

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## Fahlstrom about Sjolander - 1961

We live at a time when borders between the art forms are constantly being redrawn or abolished. Poets arrange their poems as pictorial compositions or record spoken sequences of sound which can hardly be distinguished from *musique concrète*. Composers are able to build a complete composition around the manipulation of a spoken voice. Artists sometimes create pictures by striking off newspaper photographs or mixing conglomerates of discarded objects and painted areas into something which is neither picture nor sculpture. Puppet theatre is performed by setting mobiles in motion in the constantly changing light effects on a stage.

The border between photography and painting is no longer clear, either, and it is easy to understand why this is so. Tinguely, the creator of mobiles, started out by making a form of reliefs with moving parts, powered by a machine placed at the back of them. After a while Tinguely began to wonder why he could not equally well show the play of cog wheels and driving belts at the rear and let "machine" and "shapes" become a united whole.

Similarly, some photographers have asked themselves why the action of light on photo paper and the development baths could not become a creative process comparable with the exposure of a motif — why camera work and darkroom work could not become one.

Among those photographers we find Ture Sjölander. Among those photographic artists, as he calls them, who feel dissatisfied with the dialectic of the traditional photographer's relationship to his motif: when he searches for his motif, he is the sovereign master of it, choosing and rejecting it —. At the very moment that he touches the trigger, he has become enslaved to the motif, without any possibility (other than in terms of light gradation) to do what a painter does — reshape, exclude, and emphasize in the motif.

This subjection to the motif does not have to be disrupted by eliminating the motif. The photographer simply needs to remove the limits to what is permitted and what is not allowed. To let the copy of a photo remain in the water bath for an hour is allowed (if you want to keep the motif). But leaving it there for a couple of days is the right thing as well (if you want to let the motif diffuse into deformations soft and silky as fur). Scratching with a needle or a razor blade is making accidents with scratches into a virtue — and so on.

In addition, there is the chance of manipulating a figurative or non-figurative motif by copying different pictorial elements into it, by enlargements which elevate previously imperceptible structures to the visible level, even up to monumental dimensions. The tension between scratching lines of light into a developed (black) negative the size of a matchbox and enlarging it on the Agfa papers the size of a bed sheet. This is where the photographer has at his command tricks of his art which the painter lacks, or at any rate seldom uses.

But on the other hand, is the photographer able freely to experiment with the colour? Yes, he is — if he brushes paint on to the negative and makes a colour copy.

He may also, like Ture Sjölander, brush, pour, draw etc. on a photo paper — possibly with a background copied on to it — with water, developing or fixing sodium thiosulphite solutions, ferrocyanide of potassium and other liquids. In that case the result is a single, once-only, art work. In this way he is able to achieve a tempered and melting colour scale of white, sepia, ochre, thunder cloud grey, verdigris, silver and possibly also certain blue and red tones.

In this area, however, it seems everything still remains to be done — but one single photographer's resources are not enough for the experiments to be conducted widely and in depth. Sweden has recently inaugurated its first studio of electronic music. When will photographers and painters be given the opportunity to explore this no-man's-land between their time-honoured frontlines?

But can photography, in principle, be equal to painting? Is not the glossy, non-handmade character of the photo an obstacle? People have argued in a similar way about enamel work, but that technique is now recognised as totally and completely of a kind with the painted picture. If we adjust the focus of the "conventional painting concept" when we are looking at photo painting, we will perchance discover that in its singular immaterial quality it can possess new and suggestive value.

## Öyvind Fahlström

Stockholm, 1961.

Translation from Swedish by Birgitta Sharpe

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# TIME

"VIDEOART" ELECTRONIC PAINTINGS - TELEVISED 1966 - 1967 - 1969.

1965. "The role of Photography" Commissioned by the National Swedish Television year 1964. B/w. Multimedia/electronic experiment. 30 minutes. And

an outdoor exhibition on giant bill board in the City of Stockholm plus indoors exhibitions at Lunds Konsthall and Gavle Museum among other Galleries. Represented at Moderna Museet Stockholm.

1966. "TIME" - b/w, Commissioned by the National Swedish Television. Electronic paintings televised in September 1966. 30 minutes. A video synthesizer was temporarily built, in spite of the TV-technicians apprehension. (Same technical system was later used to create MONUMENT one year later, 1967.) See letters from RUTT ELECTROPHYSICS, NY, USA dated March 12, 1974, below \*. "In principle this process is similar to methods used by Nam June Paik and others, some years later." Rutt&Etra. Nam June Paik visited Elektronmusic Studion in Stockholm July/August 1966, during the Stockholm Festival; "Visions of the Present". Static pictures from TIME was demonstrated for Paik at this point in time. A rich documentation is available from the main news media in Sweden about "TIME". Parts of "TIME" was planned to be send via satellite to New York, but the American participants, E.A.T. - Billy Kluver and &, pulled out. (See E.A.T.s and Billy Kluver's biased USA history page from Aug. 1966) "TIME" is the very first 'videoart'-work televised as an ultimate exhibition/installation statement, televised at that point in 'time' for the reason to produce an historical record as well as an evidence of 'original' visual free art, made with the electronic medium - manipulation of the electronic signal - and 'exhibited/installed' through the television, televised. Other important factors for the creation of TIME was our awareness of the fact that the "electron" was, at this Time, the smallest known particle and that all traditional visual art, up to this Time was created with light - material/colour reflecting the light - (lightpainting) and the description of our new concept should be "Electronic painting". Pontus Hulten and his associates launched the term "Machine" art as an attempt to describe the Time movement. Pierre Restany was using the term "Mec Art", later. The work was commenced early 1966. (Soundtrack by Don Cherry, USA) Paintings on canvass and paper was made from the static material, and in silk-screen prints, for a large numbers of Fine Arts Galleries and Museums 1966, ironically in a 'limited edition', signed and numbered by the artist; Ture Sjolander/Bror Wikstrom. (See National Museum Stockholm, Sweden).
1967. "MONUMENT" - b/w. Electronic paintings televised in 5 European Nations; France, Italy, Sweden, Germany and Switzerland, 1968. Monument reached an total audience of more than 150 miljon. The work surpassed the limits of "videoart" - a word first used in the beginning of 1970 - 73 - and was developed into an extended communication project, involving other visual artists, by invitations, multimedia artwork including the creation of tapestries, (Kerstin Olsson) silk/screen prints on canvass and paper - first edition, by Ture Sjolander/Lars Weck, posters, and an LP/Record Music, (Hansson&Karlsson) and some years later paintings on canvass, (Sven-Inge), and a book among other things, exhibited in several international Fine Arts Galleries. Catalogue text for Ture Sjolander by Pierre Restany, Paris Oct.31, 1968.

Gene Youngbloods book "Expanded Cinema". 1970.

1968. "SPACE IN THE BRAIN" - 30 minutes. Televised 1969, in direct connection with the moonlanding project by NASA. in Swedish Television. Soundtrack by Hansson&Karlsson. First colour electronic original painting where the electronic signal where manipulated. Described in media as an Electronic Space Opera. Based on authentic material directly delivered from NASA. Space in the Brain was a creation dealing with the ; "space out there" - the space in our brains and the electronic space, (in television) Contemporary to Clarke's 2001, except that the Picture it self was scrutinized and the subject, and focused, in Space in the Brain. The Static material from the electronic paintings was worked out into other medias and materials; tapestrys made in France among other objects was made in large size, 3 x 2 meter, for Albany Corporation USA and for IBM, Sweden, as in "TIME" and "MONUMENT", see above.
1969. And a serie of bestseller posters was produced, and world wide distributed, by Scan-Décor Upsala, Sweden.

"Man at the Moon". is the name of the LP Record.

## RUTT ELECTROPHYSICS, NY, USA.

Letter from: RUTT ELECTROPHYSICS, 21-29 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, New Yourk,N.Y., 10012. March 12, 1974.

Signed by Sherman Price.

To: International Section of Swedish National Television, Stockholm, Sweden.

Extracts;

"I am writing a detailed magazine article about the history of video animation.

From literature avaiable I gather that a videofilm program, "MONUMENT", broadcast in Stockholm in January, 1968, was the first distortion of video scan-line rasters achieved by applying tones from wave form generators.

This is of such great importance - historically - that I would like to obtain more detailed documentation of the program and of the electronic circuitry employed to manipulate the video images.

I understand from your New York office that there may have been a brochure or booklet published about the program.

I will be happy to pay any expense for publications, photocopies or other documents about the program and its production *-particulary with regard to the method of modulating the deflection voltage in the flying-spot telecine used.*

"Video synthesis" is becoming a prominent technique in TV production here in the United States, and I think it will be interesting to give credit to your broadcasting system and personal for achieving this historic innovation."

( A number of authentic documents/letters from this communications is avaiable)

No "detailed article" or even magazine was never reported or later presented after receiving the vital information from the Swedish Broadcating Company, by Rutt Electrophysics)

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**Letter from the Manager of**

# **THE PINK FLOYD.**

**Stockholm, Septembre 11<sup>th</sup> 1967.**

**Dear Messrs Sjolander & Weck.**

Having seen your interesting Stockholm exhibition of portraits of the King of Sweden made with advanced electronic techniques I have been struck by the connection between this new type of image creating and the music-and-light art presented by The Pink Floyd.

I think that your work could and should be linked with the music of The Pink Floyd in a television production, and I would like to suggest that we start arranging the practical details for such a production immediately. With all his experiences from filming in the USA and elsewhere I also feel that Mr. Lars Swanberg is the ideal man to help us make the film.

Please get in touch as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Andrew King

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# **Monument**

## **KRISTIAN ROMARE**

Art Writer

The following text was written by the Swedish Art Writer KRISTIAN ROMARE 1968.

## **MONUMENT**

electronic painting 1968

by

**TURE SJOLANDER/LARS WECK**

We create pictures. We form conceptions of all the objects of our experience. When talking to each other our conversation emerges in the form of descriptions. In that way we understand one another.

Instantaneous communication in all directions. Our world in television! The world in image and the image in the world: at the same moment, in the

consciousness and in the eyes of millions.

The true multi-images is not substance but process-interplay between people.

"Photography freed us from old concepts", said the artist Matisse. For the first time it showed us the object freed from emotion.

Likewise satellites showed us for the first time the image of the earth from the outside. Art abandoned representation for the transformational and constructional process of depiction, and Marcel Duchamp shifted our attention to the image-observer relation.

That, too, was perhaps like viewing a planet from the outside. Meta-art: observing art from the outside. That awareness has been driven further. The function of an artist is more and more becoming like that of a creative revisor, investigator and transformer of communication and our awareness of them.

Multi-art was an attempt to widen the circulation of artist's individual pictures. But a radical multi-art should not, of course, stop the mass production of works of art: it should proceed towards an artistic development of the mass-image.

MONUMENT is such a step. What has compelled TURE SJOLANDER and LARS WECK is not so much a technical curiosity as a need to develop a widened, pictorially communicative awareness.

They can advance the effort further in other directions. But here they have manipulated the electronic transformations of the telecine and the identifications triggered in us by well-known faces, our monuments. They are focal points. Every translation influences our perception. In our vision the optical image is rectified by inversion. The electronic translation represented by the television image contains numerous deformations, which the technicians with their instruments and the viewers by adjusting their sets usually collaborate in rendering unnoticeable.

MONUMENT makes these visible, uses them as instruments, renders the television image itself visible in a new way. And suddenly there is an image-generator, which - fully exploited - would be able to fill galleries and supply entire pattern factories with fantastic visual abstractions and ornaments.

Utterly beyond human imagination.

SJOLANDER and WECK have made silkscreen pictures from film frames. These stills are visual. But with television, screen images move and effect us as mimics, gestures, convulsions. With remarkable pleasure we sense pulse and breathing in the electronic movement. The images become irradiated reliefs and contours, ever changing as they are traced by the electronic finger of the telecine.

With their production, MONUMENT, SJOLANDER and WECK have demonstrated what has also been main-tained by Marshall McLuhan: that the medium of television is tactile and sculptural.

The Foundation for MONUMENT was the fact that television, as no other medium, draws the viewers into an intimate co-creativity. A maximum of identification - the Swedish King, The Beatles, Chaplin, Picasso, Hitler etc. - and a maximum of deformation.

A language that engages our total instinct for abstraction and recognition.

Vital and new graphic communication. A television Art.

Kristian Romare, Sweden 1968

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## The Artist that invented Computer Animation

### **Aapo Saask on the artist Ture Sjolander**

**2004**

On an island aptly named Magnetic Island off the coast of Australia, a Swedish artist lives in exile. Just like so many others in today's media-landscape, he was first praised and then brought to dust. However, he has left a lasting imprint on the world. As early as the 1960's, he made the first electronic animation. Had he been an inventor, he would have been celebrated as a genius today, but because he is a predecessor in the world of art, things are different. In that world, the great ones often have to die before they are recognized.

We all know how Disney's famous cartoons were made: thousands of drawings, filmed in sequence. Even today some films are made this way. However, electronic animation has opened up a new world within the film

industry and it has also made computer games and countless graphic solutions possible in business and science.

Pixar, which used to be part of Lucasfilm and then sold to Steve Jobs in the late 1980's, made the first completely computer animated film called "Andre and Wally B" in 1983. The first feature length fully animated movie was Toy Story from 1995. It was made by Pixar and distributed by Disney. Disney had already started to use computer animation in Little Mermaid from 1989, and then on through Aladdin, Lion King, Pocahontas, etc. In those fantastic movies the pictures were however first drawn on paper and then scanned into computers for painting and cleanup and superimposition over painted backgrounds.

Decades earlier, in 1965, Ture Sjolander's electronically manipulated images were broadcasted by the Swedish Television (SVT). Among other things, Ture Sjolander was experimenting with the question of how much the portrait of a person could be changed before it was unrecognizable, something which has pioneered the amazing morph-technique that is used today.

Gene Youngblood, who, alongside with Marshall McLuhan, is the most celebrated media-philosopher of today, devoted a whole chapter in his book *Expanded Cinema*, 1970, (Pre face by Buckminster-Fuller) to the experiments of the SVT. Expanded cinema means transgression of conventions as well as mind-expanding transgressions and new definitions. Sjolander's broadcasts were not technically sophisticated, but they were ground-breaking.

The film mentioned by Youngblood is "Monument" (1968) by Ture Sjolander and Lars Weck. The other earlier televised pioneering animation were "TIME" (1965/66) by Ture Sjolander and Bror Wikstrom, and later "Space in the Brain" (1969) by Ture Sjolander, Bror Wikstrom, Sven Høglund and Lasse Svanberg. Whereas most of the modern-day artists fade into oblivion, Ture Sjolander has found his place in the art history by the making of those films.

Ture, a lad from the northern city of Sundsvall, had instant success with his opening exhibition at the Sundsvalls Museum 1961. He moved to Stockholm in the beginning of the 1960's. At an exhibition in 1964 at Karlsson Gallery his imagery upset the public so much that the gallery immediately became the trendiest place for young artists in Stockholm.

In 1968, he created another scandal, when the film "Monument" was televised in most European countries. For a couple of years, Ture Sjolander was celebrated in France, Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain and the USA. In Sweden there was a lot of jealousy. The Museum of Modern Art and the National Gallery of Sweden, to name a few, bought his works, but the techniques he worked with were expensive and after a few years, he found himself without resources. Instead he started to work with celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin and Greta Garbo. They taught him that exile – mental and physical - is the only way to escape destruction for a creative genius. He moved to Australia.

Ture Sjolander's works include photos, films, books, articles, textiles, tv-programs, video-installations, happenings, sculptures and paintings – all scattered around the Globe. Tracing will be a challenging and exciting task for a future detective/biographer and web-archaeologist's.

But mostly, his work consists of a life of questioning and creation. This is what sets him aside as one of the great artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Another forerunner in the art world, the internationally celebrated Swedish composer Ralph Lundsten, says in an interview in the magazine SEX, 5, 2004: "In those days (the 19<sup>th</sup> century), a painting could create a revolution. Today people look idly at all the thousands of exhibitions that there are.' Hmm. Oh, really. How clever he is', and they yawn... If I were a visual artist, and if my ambition was to create something new, I would devote myself to the possibilities of the computer."

In 1974, Sherman Price of Rutt Electrophysics, wrote to the Swedish Television Company (SVT): "Video Synthesis is becoming a prominent technique in TV production here in the United States, and I think it will be interesting to give credit to your broadcasting system and personnel for achieving this historic invention."

He was referring to Ture Sjolander's revolutionary work in the 1960's. No one at the SVT could at that time imagine the importance that this innovation would have for television, and hereby lost a lead position in the computer-development business.

Amongst the younger generation of computer animators, few know that they have a Swedish predecessor. Many engineers were probably working away in their cellars in those days, trying to do the same thing, but Sjolander was the first person to show his results on the air. If any of you would like to have a look at the Godfather of animation, you can find a glimpse of him by googling.

He did not seek to patent his inventions and he has made no money from it. However, he has made it to the history books as one of the great precursors of art - and perhaps also of technology - of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For the past decades, Ture Sjolander has mostly lived in Australia, but he has also worked in other countries, such as Papua New Guinea and China.

After a couple of decades of silence, Sjolander's groundbreaking work was shown at Fylkingen, the avant guard media and music hide out in Stockholm in the spring of 2004.

In the autumn of 2004, some of his recent acrylic paintings on canvas were exhibited at the Gallery Svenshog outside of Lund, Sweden. This was to commemorate the forty years that have gone by since his last (scandalous) exhibition at Lunds Konsthall. Many artists take a pleasure in provoking the established art world. Ture Sjolander also provokes the rest of the world.

Aapo Saask

2004-08-26

citat from:

## Aktuell Fotografi

Sweden

no 12, Dec **1977** (120 p.)

The headlines on this spread give a limited picture of Ture Sjolander's activities in the area of visual arts. The number of pages of Aktuell Fotografi would not suffice to render all the newspaper clippings in which he has featured!

In 1961, Ture Sjolander made his debut as a visual artist with a visual exhibition in his native town Sundsvall. He called the exhibition at Sundsvalls Museum 'photoGRAPHICS'. The late artist Öyvind Fahlström wrote the text for the catalogue of the exhibition. We quote: "one single photographer's resources are not enough for the experiments to be conducted widely and in depth. Sweden has recently inaugurated its first studio for electronic music. When will photographers and painters be given the opportunity to explore this no-man's-land between their time honoured frontlines?"

The photographic light paintings of the exhibition were approximately a couple of square meters, black and white graphic prints, produced with the help of light and various chemicals. Some of the images were in colour, made by oxidising the silver of the photo paper with the help of a burning hot flat-iron.

Kurt Bergengren reviewed the exhibition in the afternoon paper Aftonbladet. He wrote: "He does not call himself a photographer, but a photo-graphic artist, and what is new about his pictures is first and foremost the

technique he uses. Sjolander indicates many new paths - by bringing back the art of photography to its earliest photochemical experiments."

In the magazine [Konstrevy](#), no 1 1963, Ture Sjolander's experiments are presented in depth, and in connection with this, he exhibited his graphic art at the [Gallerie Observatorium](#) in Stockholm, along with artists [Lars Hillersberg](#) and [Ulf Rahmberg](#).

[Åke Daun](#) wrote in *Folket*, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 1963: "He calls himself a photo-graphic artist, a union of photographer and graphic artist. He has successfully managed - it sounds like a dream - to combine photographic methods with free artistic creativity. From this technological platform, Sjolander takes us along on trips to reality, but along other roads than the ones we have tread before."

[Ludvig Rasmusson](#) wrote in the student paper *Gaudeamus*: "By varying his formal ways of expressing himself from one painting to the next, he does not show a lack of personality. He simply does not trust that form of personality in art, which consists in making one painting look like the next one, and he wishes to force the viewer to look beyond form, towards content."

[Alf Nordström](#) of the morning paper *Dagens Nyheter* wrote: "All those who like pretty and well-behaved photo-art are seriously warned against having a closer look at this exhibition. It offers howls and grimaces, cross-eyed faces and horror studies of the female flesh. But all those who are interested in seeing a photographer entering the current cultural debate, should not neglect seeing 'You have been photographed.' The exhibition has a very liberating feel to it. Its nihilism leaves a burning imprint on your retina and the conventional images are burned away. Your eyes begin to see anew."

In the news program *Aktuellt*, [Ulf Thoren](#) showed parts of the exhibition, and Sjolander coined the expression "We want to exhibit, not to inhibit." During the two weeks that the exhibition was shown, some 10,000 people came to see it, many of them attracted by the TV presentation.

In the afternoon paper *Expressen*, [Katja Walden](#) wrote: "... the artist has reached his goal, already when we react, when something happens between us and the photograph. After [Ulf Linde](#), in the year of pop art and a couple of months after the New York-nights, everything is still possible. Ture Sjolander has made something happen in the area of photography."

[Erland Törngren](#) wrote in the paper *Arbetaren*: "His images make most of what we saw the other year, at the ambitious exhibition 'Swedish people as seen by 11 photographers,' look medieval. 'You have been photographed' is one the bravest attempts of a coup, one of the boldest opening moves, that has ever hit Swedish photography."

On April 24, 1965, in the paper *Kvällsposten*, Sjolander asked: "Why do pictures have to be translated into words?"

On July 6, 1965, [Bengt Olvång](#) wrote in the paper *Stockholms Tidningen*: "Ture Sjolander's television appearance is characterised by a warm humaneness and a bizarre, uproarious sense of humour. One of its most 'shocking' features is composed of a grand piece of Vivaldi music, illustrated by a little boy who is picking his nose. However, what is really most shocking, is the way in which the Broadcasting Corporation is acting. Heads of department become self-appointed censors, and in the name of 'The Swedish People', they erase program features, such as Sjolander's TV film. The thought of letting opinions and values develop freely is totally foreign to them. The broadcasting monopoly watches over people's opinions and hinders all attempts at moving in any radical direction."

[Jonas Sima](#) wrote in *Stockholms Tidningen*, on October 23, 1965: "Sjolander also has opinions and a social temperament. He has produced the kind of film I want to watch - and produce."

On October 28, 1965, [Mauritz Edström](#) wrote in *Dagens Nyheter*: "He is simply testing our attitudes in relation to the photography, by placing it in unexpected contexts. When he places his enlargements on billboards and then films them, the result is really challenging: what resources of expression can't we find lying idle under the old cobweb of conventional views on pictures!"

In the *Dagens Nyheter's* art column, [Olle Granath](#) wrote on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, 1966: "The technique has the impersonality of the American pop-artists, but in the motif, there is so much more interest in the contents of the picture. The exciting pictures of this exhibition are those where you see these gigantic photographs

posted on some empty outdoor wall-space above people's heads - people who are rushing past on the street like anonymous shadows, without reacting to the new and provoking elements of their town. Being in such a hurry, they may not have seen the provocation, but only the resemblance. There is something eerily suggestive about these pictures, which remind you of the documentary movie 'The Eye' that was shown on movie theatres some years ago."

In 1968, when [Annagreta Dyring](#) of the magazine *Populär Fotografi*, resumed what had happened in Swedish photography, she wrote this among other things: "Ture Sjolander was the instigator of a recent event that caused great resonance in the world of Swedish photography. It was at the time of poked tongues. The grimace in the picture became the expression of a provocatively defensive attitude towards a perhaps too expectant world around us. It meant to build a bridge between the picture and the bloated spectator, even if it were to be built out of ridicule. It gave another angle to the democracy of the photograph. The traditional silence and the worn-out ways of presenting things had gotten alternatives worthy of discussion. In other words, it was a bridge. It did not matter (at least it does not matter looking at it in hindsight) if the bridge was built out of deep respect, it was accepted even if it consisted of disgust or horror. It was somewhat surrealistic, with a hint of dada. The main thing was to give the viewers something to sink their teeth into. Sjolander's cheeky revolt against standardised thinking and photographic conformism preceded - in its pronounced form - other attempts at doing the same thing in this country. It disturbed obsolete ways of thinking in the field of traditional visual art."

## Electronic painting.

'TIME,' as well as 'Have you thought about the role of photography...?' , were produced for television, which its technology and basic functions in mind. Similar electronic works of art have since rapidly been produced in different places of the world. Video art is now an established notion. An American video artist, [Nam June Paik](#) (born in Korea), has applied the same methods when producing his works, after having Sjolander- Wikström show him 'TIME', both in person and broadcast on Swedish television. [Pontus Hultén](#), the former director of the [Museum of Modern Art](#) in Stockholm, recommended that Sjolander should apply for a government artist grant of SEK 6,000, in 1966. Hultén wrote: "In recent years, Sjolander has, showing great skills of inventiveness, worked on projects that bring together several different, but costly proceedings of work. Since his ideas are among the most interesting ones that have appeared in recent years, I would highly recommend you to consider him for this grant." And Sjolander got the grant.

In December of 1966, Sjolander went to London, Paris and Hamburg, and got an invitation to produce a new piece of work from the French television (ORTF). Along with the foreign correspondent of the leading morning paper *Dagens Nyheter*, [Lars Weck](#) (who was studying at the Sorbonne University in Paris at the time), he outlined a new "program" called 'MONUMENT'. This collaboration marked the beginning of a large-scale media art-project with an audience of approximately 150 million people. Weck wrote in *Dagens Nyheter* on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, 1967 (before the beginning of their co-operation): "Ture Sjolander has not used his first long sejour abroad to go on pilgrimages to widely known monuments, unless you consider television one. He finds it interesting to work directly for television, both because it makes every person's home a gallery, and because it gives the artist so many technical possibilities."

The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation did not show any interest until both the French and the German television companies had invited him to work with them. The Swedish TV-production was brought about by [Kristian Romare](#). Several European countries broadcasted the completed production, which was also transformed into different graphic productions on a large scale, there was the LP-record 'Monument' with [Hansson/Karlsson](#), the book 'Monument' with a preface written by Bengt Feldreich and TV technicians (among others), there were outdoor- and gallery exhibitions. Others artists were inspired by the visual material and coloured images from 'Monument' in oil-colour and in various textile fabrics. Images from 'Monument' were shown at the 5<sup>th</sup> Biennale in Paris, in the fall of 1967. [Pierre Restany](#) - one of Europe's most respected art critics - wrote that unfortunately he was unable to attend the whole event because of a journey to South America, but had to settle for the last few days: "But better late than never. Sjolander's works struck me with their absolute modernism. I was also struck by his acute instincts, his poetic use of the technology of the mass-medium - an iconographic liberation on the level of information technology - all in the language of the masses. Sjolander's works of art, which combine art and technology, become an attempt to preserve our poetic survival. It is a truly humane, or rather humanistic achievement, in the modern sense of the word."

In March, 1967, Sjolander-Weck formulated a kind of manifesto in the magazine *Bazaar* (no.1, published by the



**Galleri Karlsson** in Stockholm): "The art gallery has to come to the people, obviously it is not working the other way round. At least not if you are asking for art to be meaningful to more than a handful of people. Without failing or most popular galleries, or the admirable role of the Modern Museum of Art, one has to acknowledge that they in no way can compete with a medium such as television for range - it is our so far most effective means of distributing images. Most people will agree that television is extremely effective, but in art circles television is seen as nothing more than a publicity-machine. Television can produce programs on an exhibition, explaining and attracting visitors to the source itself, which consists of the de facto exhibited objects. Few people are ready to agree that television itself is a medium and a gallery for the visual artist. They are again haunted by the myth of the original, the "thing" which is "art itself." It is a concession to this same myth, when the artists of Multiart are asked to sign an edition of 1/300 copies. It would have been more logical to print, that is, machine sign a mass-produced piece of art. If you work directly for the TV screen, with electronics as your brush, no one would probably think of having artists travelling around, signing all the millions of television monitors."

In 1968, Ture Sjolander, along with 600 million other viewers, studied the satellite transmissions from NASA's spaceflights around the moon. This study resulted in a new production for the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, called 'Space in the Brain.' People now had colour TV, and it seemed natural for an artist to comment on those historic events with a new piece of work.

A new agreement was made with the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, this time with Sjolander, Bror Wikström, Lars Svanberg and Sven Höglund. The photographer **Lennart Nilsson** delivered a recently taken picture of the human eye as seen from the inside, and NASA's photo department contributed with the best film footage from all their previous spaceflights. The final commentary of their "space-opera" was an electronic explosion of colour. The theme of the production was two poles: one, which we call space (and that we do not know so much about yet), and the other, that which a person registers through the eye (and which we do not know too much about either). This, and man's vanity, was that 'space' which the artists referred to. Tapestries for interior design and world-wide best-selling posters were produced out of this static visual material. Hansson/Karlsson made the music for the TV-"program." An LP-record was also released.

In 1970, Sjolander's next project was a analytical photo-essay, a book on the mysterious **Greta Garbo** (published by **Harper&Collins**, New York 1971). This time he was working with ordinary documentary pictures, nothing was electronically manipulated. The book was a success, both commercially and as a documentary.

The Garbo biography was published in several countries, such as the United States, Canada, the UK, Sweden and Germany.

Chaplin's "My life in pictures," was Ture Sjolander's idea, and as a compensation for him letting them take over the book project and the dummy of the book, Chaplin's family ordered an edition of a graphic art portfolio containing 30 different screen-prints, 60 x 60 cm. The portfolios were signed and numbered by Sjolander and autographed by **Charlie Chaplin**. Sjolander has interviewed both Chaplin and Garbo and he calls those two great contemporary stars "images." It is as such, that they have been met by their audience of millions of people.

Rune Jonsson

August **1977**

Translated from Swedish by Linda Henriksson.

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From the Swedish Culture Magazine

**KANNIBAL**

**No 3:1985**

"In 1961, Swedish television only broadcasted on one channel, in black and white of course. The most upsetting thing that had been shown so far, was **Per Oscarsson** taking off his longjohns in the family entertainment program Hylands Hörna, and this caused a public outcry. It was in those quiet backwaters, at a

time when [Jan Myrdal](#) had not yet been hit on the head with the Vietnam billy stick, that the artists Ture Sjolander and Bror Wikström started experimenting with the TV medium as an art-form. Why produce 100 litographies, when you can distribute your work of art to 8, 50, 100 people via television and satellites?, they wondered. But most important was the protest against the traditional use of the television technology itself, and turning a media-development into a free and artistic intervention became necessary.

However, it was difficult to find the necessary support to realise their ideas. The framework was very narrow, but Ture Sjolander already knew this. The year before, in 1965, he had made a first attempt to produce television art, directly for the medium, and he was stopped. The program, "Have you thought about the role of photography...?", was already in the TV-guides, but it was completely censored by the direction of the Broadcasting Corporation. "They have never given me any valid justification for their censorship," Ture Sjolander says today.

Perhaps it was censored because he had photographed nude models from grotesque angles and wildly grimacing people? Along with Oscarsson's longjohns, this provides us with a clear image of how far you could go in the Swedish society of 1968.

"Ture lives in a pink wooden house on Gärdet in Stockholm. It is surrounded by fences, mysterious sculptures and menacing beware-of-the-dog signs. Is he a bitter recluse, who is hiding away in his nest, while dreaming about the happy '60s? Not at all. Ture looks fresh and wears well-ironed clothes, looking a lot younger than 47.

First, some personal details:

Recipient of a Royal Artist Grant. He is not listed in the telephone directory, and it is extremely difficult to get through to his answering machine. He was the first person in Sweden, and probably internationally, who realised the possibilities of video and television for art, culture and advanced communication. As early as 1966, he wanted to distribute his "video art" (even though the word was not yet invented) via satellite.

He is a multi-media artist who has collaborated with, among others, the rock band Hansson&Karlsson. Hologram expert. Author on books about Greta Garbo and Charles Chaplin. Founder of the association Video-NU-Videocentrum (with 150 members and fifteen corporate members).

Except for being a visionary, Sjolander has a bunch of other projects coming up. He is trying to get government funding so he can document the public art in Sweden (or will McDonald's be the sponsor?). He wants to make a movie out of [Erik Lundqvist's](#) book "No tobacco, no Hallelujah" (he has already bought the film rights from the author, and a contract has been signed with the production company Måsen and the author) and [Ann Zacharias](#). He is planning a trip to Papua New Guinea.

Sjolander started thinking about the possibilities of the TV medium and its power to connect with its audience. He found a partner in Bror Wikström, who was a major talent at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. However, he had turned his back on those very people calling him a talent. Sjolander and Wikström became inseparable and they followed in no one's footsteps, they went beyond pop art, which was the most extreme art form at the time.

We wanted to punch pop art in the face, meaning that we wanted to use those big outdoor billboards and wall spaces in subway stations for example, that inspired the pop artists, and we were inspired to use this space as an art space, not for commercial purposes.

Bror and I were "best friends and enemies" at the same time, we were working on a completely unexplored theme, we worked day and night for one and a half years with a new manifest, on television, on photo exhibitions and galleries. I remember Bror advertising among the ads for galleries in Dagens Nyheter: "Gallery of Thought - outdoor exhibition" in Kungsträdgården (*the King's Gardens*) in Stockholm city. But it was not a "gallery" as such. Kungsträdgården is always a gallery of thought, the image that remains on your retina. Bror has left the art world now, he cannot go back to painting, he cannot turn back the time. The "bijouterie-painters" hated him because he was so far ahead of them, both artistically and academically. My activities in those years were a protest against the word. The art critics were writing away, expressing guesses and opinions. "You go ahead and write," I thought. "Ten years ago I presented a complete presentation about a video studio for research, education and production (it has been postponed for years by the Art Council of Sweden, that is complaining about how badly prepared we are for satellite programs today!).

"I called on all the political parties in 1974 together with Bror Wikström.

Demand:

increase in the budget of the Government Art Council for Public Art, for the purpose of artistically humanising public places. At the communist party leader's, the clothing was a working class jacket, at the right wing party leader Boman's, the clothing was Sunday-best shirt and a grey suit.

**Result:**

the budget increased from SEK 3,7 million to 11 million! (Ture does not mind the epithet Cameleon Master).

"I know what is normal and acceptable in society, and at the same time I am bored with it. Sometimes I psyche myself up by behaving recklessly ... to feel free." There you go. To the above catalogue, we may add that Ture Sjolander, if anyone, can be named the father of Swedish video art. The curators of the [International Video Festival in Stockholm](#), held from February through March, managed to convince Sjolander to come there and talk about how it all began in Sweden. Ture showed up, immaculately dressed in a white suit and pink tie. Ture began by saying: "We wanted the artist to really exhibit, not to inhibit at museums and galleries." On the last night of the festival, Ture Sjolander showed the TV program that had been stopped in 1965, on a 6x7 m big screen, just after the show about American punk and underground videos. "- Visual art of today is at the same stage that literature was before Gutenberg's invention of the printing press." This is a typical quote from Sjolander in 1963. He explains: "Let's take an artist such as Ulf Rahmberg, who paints symbolic paintings with a very political content. He works six months on a painting, using the most expensive canvas and oil paint. Then he sells it to some damn wealthy dentist who shuts it up in his private living room. When he has such an important symbolic message, he should paint on toilet paper with poster paint and distribute it on postcards, posters, video and television! Preferably via satellite!

The distribution is just as important as art itself: to communicate about communication is just as important as the mode of communication. The Mona Lisa-painting is not interesting per se, it is the interplay between the people looking at the painting that has become interesting. Because almost no one is interested in the painting, its power of attraction is over after three minutes."

[Öyvind Fahlström](#) once put it this way: "Hang up a [Rembrandt](#) on your wall, it will blend in with the pattern of the linoleum within a weeks time. It is just a myth, an illusion, that its value is alive and continuous and that you can look at it anew one day after the next ... People who can experience that must be completely crazy."

Öyvind Fahlström died in 1976 and when we meet Sjolander, parts of Fahlström's production is hanging on the walls of one of Stockholm's more pretentious galleries. We looked at the exhibition and felt slightly vertiginous, or perhaps nauseous? Fahlström's protests against the US warfare in Vietnam were sold for approximately SEK 500,000 a piece, and then we are talking about graphic prints. "It is interesting, but really not that strange," Ture says. "First of all: I do not believe that Fahlström tried to express a protest, he connected a modern series of events... "(the magazine is ruined and the text illegible).

"Sjolander speaks fast, is well articulated and convincing. He runs around in his house, finding newspaper clippings with quotes to support his ideas. I am sure he can be a difficult bastard.

- Once I was invited to talk about public art with some old local government councillors. I suggested that I'd make something with big fingerprints in concrete, where the grooves of the fingerprint would be about 1/2 metre tall. 'Well, isn't that a funny idea,' said one of the old councillors, 'one would have to hope that it were to be the city mayor's fingerprints then.' I felt completely fed up and paralysed by the whole thing, by the disrespect of an original idea. I couldn't see any development. I couldn't do what Michelangelo did, which was shoving the axe into the ground in front of the councillor and say: 'It was my concept, therefore it will be my fingerprints.'

In the socialistic countries, art is also governed by the politicians' wishes. There is a pressure from above: 'You bloody artist, we want you to paint a worker who is using a sledge hammer.' So the artists adapt, and become clever "photographic" painters. 'Just look at the art clubs in Sweden. They have tremendous power. There are 400 clubs, and it is said that they have about 400,000 members altogether, at Atlas Copco, ICA, Honeywell Bull, whatever. It's a fun thing for those who sit in front of their computer screens all day long, they get a bit of status if they can do some art-thing in their spare time. For them to buy something for their art raffles, it had better be something ingratiating. Artists are aware of this now, so they paint something that will please the majority - instead of going broke.

1966

see below:

**DAGENS NYHETER**

The largest daily news paper in Sweden  
Bonnier AB

This following article about: "TIME" by Ture Sjolander and Bror Wikstrom, was published in Dagens Nyheter August 29, 1966.

Signed: DIA  
(Dick Idestam-Almqvist)

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TV "exposes" the present in electronic pictures during the Jazz Festival.

"We want to exhibit, not to inhibit"

So the artists Ture Sjolander and Bror Wikstrom say, of current interest as they are for the coming jazz festival within the Festival of Stockholm. Some time during the three days of the jazz festival (Sept 16 - 18) the two picture experimenter's new film is shown on TV. It is ready made for TV with the apparatus of the TV and with the basic function of the TV before one's sight.

Some year ago Sjolander and Wikstrom brought about a sensation by exposing pictures on giant billboards outdoor's in Stockholm's City. If you had something to display you shouldn't fence it, neither in the museums nor among the private art galleries, but expose it where people are to be found, they thought. So consequently they have chosen the biggest medium of communication, television, for their latest exhibition.

Sjolander - Wikstrom are fully conscious of the topicalness of today, another reason for choosing television. What else can be more actual than to demonstrate the formal possibilities of TV, and what else can be more actual than mirror the present while you are demonstrating these formal possibilities?

"Scanner" re-interprets.

"Time" is the name of the exhibition, which is based upon various actualities that Sjolander-Wikstrom have come across during the spring, for instance "Gemini" and foetal-pictures. The main part is taken up by the very much to fore avant-garde jazz-musician Don Cherry and his quintet at the Golden Circle.

The pictures are run through a specially built "scanner", an apparatus that in the ordinary cases is producing "real" pictures, but which in this sensitized state is "re-interpreting" what the camera has seen, and thus is creating new pictures. The technicians and the artists have decided what the apparatus looks like, and the apparatus has decided what the pictures look like.

The present is reflected.

Consequently the couple Sjolander-Wikstrom is demonstrating a phenomenon that is very much up to date just now: the electronic "machine" picture.

The Korean Nam June Paik is for the moment sitting at the Swedish Radio and is working with similar things. He will show his result at the festival of Fylkingen "Visions of the Present". But this will take place one week after Sjolander-Wikstrom's demonstration, televised on Swedish National Television.

Ture Sjolander and Bror Wikstrom hold that they by "TIME" have accomplished a total reflection of the present. Novelties and actualities have been interpreted by an apparatus that per se is a novelty and an actuality. A vision of the present.

Their Ideas they spread in different quises like rings on the water. "Time" will be shown at ABF (The Worker's Federation of Culture) during the festival, still pictures of the film - made on silk-screen - will be exposed, and an edition of 300 prints have already been sold to MULTIART, the darling of Kristian Romare.

Finally a summary of the film will be edited in book-form very soon. And then, furthermore, Sjolander-Wikstrom are negotiating just now about contributing at the festival which the *Americans* of "Fylkingen" are planning in New York in October.

Possibly parts of "Time" are going to be transmitted by satellite.

DIA

(Journalist Dick Idestam-Almqvist)

-TURE SJOLANDER  
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