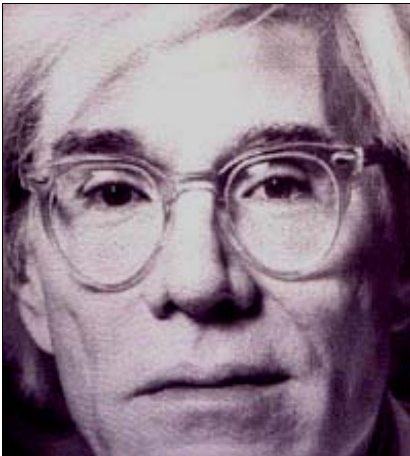


Andy Warhol's
Multi-screen/mixed-media environment
THE EXPLODING PLASTIC INEVITABLE



ANDY WARHOL'S EXPLODING PLASTIC INEVITABLE



The Exploding Plastic Inevitable is Andy Warhol's multi-screen multimedia environment and the most advanced of his multi-screen works.

Warhol, although primarily known as a painter, was also a sculptor, a graphic artist, a filmmaker, a music producer, an author, and a publisher. The scope of his creative activity was extraordinary – and it touched upon the entire range of the era's popular culture.

Warhol's use and understanding of media was far more advanced than any artist of his time. He also showed a very astute understanding of the emerging post-modern culture at a very early stage in its development. He manifested this most clearly in the creation of his multi-screen multi-media environment entitled "the Exploding Plastic Inevitable".

"The Exploding Plastic Inevitable, generated during the 1960's, has often been cited as the pioneering multimedia experience. Audiences were bombarded with floor to ceiling projections of Warhol films such as Vinyl. At center stage, the Velvet underground were transported with Warhol-directed lighting effects. Images filled the show, that were disturbing and abrasive as Lou Reed's songs. Collaboration between artists and musicians had never before, or since, proved so influential despite its short life span".

Kate Butlers

“The...Exploding Plastic Inevitable remains as the strongest and most developed example of intermedia art. Although (other) productions... have since achieved greater technical dexterity on a visual plane, no one has yet managed to communicate a guiding spirit through the complex form as well as Warhol and the Underground.”

Branden W. Joseph, Art historian, Univ of California

To create the “EPI”, Warhol collaborated with some of the most creative people in their fields. In music, he collaborated with the Velvet Underground, which was composed of some of the most advanced rock musicians of the time, including Lou Reed, John Cale, Sterling Morrison, Mo Tucker, and the singer/actress Nico. Once adjusted to the initial sonic blast of the Velvet Underground, the listener at the Dom could hear the undertones of Rhythm and Blues, improvisations of free jazz as well as the musical avant-garde and the mystical drone of LaMonte Young.

It was in November, 1965, after completing several films in the dual-screen format, that Warhol undertook to create his first multi-screened multimedia environment for the Expanded Cinema Festival at the Filmmakers Cinematheque in New York. He utilized his films and still images together with the music of The Velvet Underground, composed by Lou Reed and John Cale.

The next phase in the development of Warhol's multi-screen multimedia art was the event called UpTight. It was also the official debut for the Velvet Underground and singer/actress Nico. She had been raised in Berlin in the aftermath of the Second World War. At the age of seventeen, she moved to Paris to model. She perfected her “ice goddess” look with hair fashioned in long bangs extending to her eyebrows, her luminous eyes and prominent cheekbones. Warhol immediately saw Nico's value as a “*Femme Fatale*” and suggested that she sing together with the Velvet Underground.

Warhol was invited to speak to the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry at its annual black tie banquet on January 10, 1966. When asked about his choice to invite Warhol, Dr. Campbell rhetorically asked: "*How can you be immune to art and the creative process? Surely you're aware of the barely visible line between genius and madness?*"

Not being a public speaker, Warhol decided his presentation would consist of the screening of his films together with the music of the Velvet Underground and Nico. It was called UpTight.

The next manifestation of the UpTight series took place February 8-13, 1966 at The Filmmakers' Cinematheque. It consisted of the double-screen projection of Warhol's film, *More Milk, Yvette* together with *The Velvet Underground*, followed by a double-screen showing of his dual-screen film *Lupe*. These were accompanied by a live appearance of The Velvet Underground and Nico, Edie Sedgwick, Gerard Malanga and Barbara Rubin.

Warhol then recruited the professional film editor, Danny Williams, who created the light environment for "EPI". Most of the key people at the "Factory" were also involved, including Paul Morrissey as show coordinator and Gerard Malanga, who coordinated the dance performances which included, at various times, Mary Woronov, Ingrid Superstar, International Velvet, and Eric Emerson. Warhol also made extensive use of his experimental films in the "EPI", such as *Vinyl*.

The next evolution of the multi-screen show was in March, 1966 and was called "The Erupting Plastic Inevitable." It was presented at Rutgers University and at the University of Michigan Film Festival in Ann Arbor, where it was enthusiastically received.



It was in April 1966 that the first manifestation of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable took place at "The Dom" in New York City.



The Exploding Plastic Inevitable attracted many people and a great deal of publicity and media. The filmmaker Barbara Rubin and poet Allen Ginsberg were among the personalities participating, as was the well-known news anchorman Walter Cronkite, who came by to see what was happening, as did Jackie Kennedy and much of New York's society. It became a major culture happening as news crews reported on the scene.

Warhol said of this time:

*"We all knew something revolutionary was happening.
We just felt it.
Things could not look this strange and new
without some barrier being broken."*



The Exploding Plastic Inevitable then went on tour across the USA to the west coast, with performances in Los Angeles and San Francisco.



The tour returned to Chicago in the mid-west in June 1966 and it was here that the filmmaker Ronald Nameth made extensive film recordings of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable every night during a one week period. It is this film material which has been utilized to create comprehensive exhibitions of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable:

- *The multiple screen environment recreating the EPI space.*
- *The information presentation – EPI in the context of the 60's*
- *The Photography Exhibit - 125 images.*
- *The single-screen video film – 22 minutes.*



The Exploding Plastic Inevitable is the apex of Warhol's multimedia art— which utilize his films, his factory collaborators, the music of the Velvet Underground and Nico, and the dance performances of Gerard Malanga and others. More importantly, "EPI" reflects Warhol's astute ability to powerfully reveal the emerging post-modern culture.



What was it that allowed Warhol to gain such an astute insight and understanding of media and to utilize it so well – especially in his multi-screen art?

Two main factors can be seen to have been major influences: The first influence was the circumstance of his birth. Warhol came from a very poor immigrant family. Both parents had emigrated from a small village in a former part of Czechoslovakia, at the onset of the great Depression. His father Andrei was a working class immigrant who was forced to take on odd jobs to support the family, while his wife Julia did part-time

seems to have been interested in adapting another identity, having experienced the problems of being an outsider – of being an immigrant, of being sickly, of immigrant, of being sickly, of being ungainly, of being shy, of being the opposite of the image of the red-blooded American boy. His mother doted on him and during his periods of sickness, she bought him comic books, coloring books, and movie magazines.

Warhol commented: *“I had three nervous breakdowns when I was a child...I would spend all summer listening to the radio and lying in bed with my doll and my cut-out paper dolls..”* He was fascinated by the “stars of fame and fortune” in Hollywood and fell in love with Shirley Temple and painted a picture of Heddy Lamarr. His long periods of sickness also resulted in learning difficulties in school. He had problems reading and writing, and perhaps was dyslexic.

Says Warhol: *“I came from nowhere.”*

In addition, to being excluded from traditional society in his youth, Warhol had almost everything else against him – instead of being handsome, verbally adept and charming, he was self-conscious, blank and unattractive. He could barely accomplish the most basic tasks such as starting a conversation, telling a story, operating camera, writing a letter, making a meal or arranging a party. Warhol yearned to be someone else. He wanted to be a different person, both physically and socially. He wanted to transcend the limitations of his birth.

Warhol's mother and father very much believed in the “American Dream” – that with education and one's own determination, that one could succeed and become rich and famous. And they instilled this vision in young Andy. His father, working twelve hours a day, six days a week, was eventually able to save fifteen thousand dollars before his death (Andy was 13 at the time.) to pay for Andy's first two years at college. On completion of college, Warhol went to New York, and on his second day, got a job as a freelance designer for *Glamour* magazine. This was the start of his career. He worked in the advertising industry and became a very successful designer. His work in advertising gave him a powerful insight and deep understanding on the use of media in contemporary culture. Empowered by his mother's faith, and his own will to succeed, Warhol eventually learned to take all the seemingly negative factors of his physical and social limitations and utilize them to achieve his goal for fame and fortune.

His mother told him:

Andy, just believe in destiny, you will get it in a dream....

you will do something great, crazy, terrific.”

The second major factor which influenced Warhol – was his ability to astutely understand media and to utilize this knowledge in the pursuit of his goals. It seems that his early dyslexia had forced him to learn to “scan” information as a way to compensate for his disability in reading. This, together with his being an “outsider” in society had sharpened his awareness of what was required to become accepted in society, and how to use media to accomplish his goals.

He thus learned to see emerging cultural trends by constantly scanning headlines and tabloids, the radio and TV, and mode and fashion magazines - sometimes staying up all night! He also scanned music in the same way - he had the habit of playing the same rock and roll records over and over again until he got into the core of the meaning.

Through his previous experience in advertising, and through his learned ability to scan and utilize media as a means to understand emerging trends, Warhol learned how to craft “brands” and “icons” in media. In the final process, he was eventually able to make himself into his own unique branded icon and a work of art.

It was this focused interest in media that also prompted him to work in film, video, audio and print media. It is not generally known that Warhol was a comprehensive experimental film maker, making over 500 films. It was in 1965 that Warhol had proclaimed that he was leaving painting, to make films and work in the various media of audio, video and print. In the following years, he only returned to painting in order to generate the money needed for the making of his films and media art.

What most interested Warhol in making films were activities that involved other people. Art making, especially film, was an inherently social process. Thus, these required collaboration. This collaborative process began in January, 1964 when Warhol moved into the space that would come to be known as the “Factory”. Within the first year, the combined connections of Warhol and his two assistants, Gerard Malanga and Billy Linich, had generated a rich network of associations that reached into the worlds of poetry, fashion, film and art.

The collaborations at the “factory” developed models of authorship that did not fit into the conventional mode and ideal of the modern solitary artist. Instead, Warhol’s implementation of the collaborative process at the Factory was a clear indication of his understanding of the new conditions in the emerging post-modern world.

In the final process, Warhol's real "art work" was not the creation of a physical object, (although the paintings were necessary for the art market) but rather it was the creation of a physical, social, and psychological space where people were able to "perform themselves", such as the Exploding Plastic Inevitable.



In actuality, Warhol was making "Reality TV" in the middle 1960's. It has taken forty years for the world of media to understand, absorb and implement the insights that Warhol saw so clearly emerging in the post-modern culture:



THE FILM

OF THE EXPLODING PLASTIC INEVITABLE

During one week of performances of the EPI in Chicago, in June, 1966, the film-maker Ronald Nameth worked every night filming, to make a comprehensive recording of the event. The film is a multiple level superimposition of imagery that sometimes reaches a depth of five layers. The film works extensively with the experience of time through its changing rhythms of motion. This film material is now the only extensive motion picture document of the EPI.

Nameth created several versions from this film material in order to present as complete a document as possible – one version was for single screen projection while another version was for a 4-screen video installation that re-creates the spatial experience and environment of the EPI. A photographic exhibition was also created.



In his book *“Expanded Cinema”* film writer and critic Gene Youngblood commented on his experience of the film, saying:

“Andy Warhol’s....sensorium, the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, was, while it lasted, the most unique and effective discotheque environment prior to the Fillmore/Electric Circus era, and it is safe to say that the EPI has never been equaled. Similarly, Ronald Nameth’s cinematic homage to the EPI stands as a paragon of excellence in the kinetic rock-show genre.”

Youngblood continues:

"Nameth managed to transform his film into something far more than a mere record of an event. Like Warhol's show, Nameth's EPI is an experience, not an idea. In fact, the ethos of the entire pop life-style seems to be synthesized in Nameth's dazzling kinesthetic master-piece. Here, form and content are virtually synonymous, and there is no misunderstanding what we see."

It's as though the film itself has exploded and reassembled in a jumble of shards and prisms. Gerard Malanga and Ingrid Superstar dance frenetically to the music of the Velvet Underground (Heroin, European Son, and a quasi-East Indian composition), while their ghost images writhe in Warhol's Vinyl projected on a screen behind. There is a spectacular sense of frantic uncontrollable energy, communicated almost entirely by Nameth's exquisite manipulation of the medium."



"EPI was photographed on color and black-and-white stock during one week of performances by Warhol's troupe. Because the environment was dark and because of the flash-cycle of the strobe lights, Nameth shot at eight frames per second and printed the footage at the regular twenty-four fps. In addition, he developed a mathematical curve for repeated frames and super-impositions, so that the result is an eerie world of semi-slow motion against an aural background of incredible frenzy. Colors were super-imposed over black-and-white negatives and vice-versa. An extraordinary off-color grainy effect resulted from pushing the ASA rating of his color stock; thus the images often seem to lose their cohesiveness as though wrenched apart by the sheer force of the environment."

Gene Youngblood continues, saying:

"Watching the film is like dancing in a strobe room: time stops, motion retards, the body seems separated from the mind. The screen bleeds onto the walls, the seats. Flak bursts of fiery color explode with slow fury. Staccato strobe guns stitch galaxies of silverfish over slow motion, stop-motion close-ups of the dancers' dazed ecstatic faces."

"Nameth does to cinema what the Beatles do with



music: his film is dense, compact, yet somehow fluid and light. It is extremely heavy, extremely fast, yet airy and poetic, a mosaic, a tapestry, a mandala that sucks you into its whirling maelstrom."



"Using essentially graphic materials, Nameth rises above a mere graphic exercise: he makes kinetic empathy a new kind of poetry."

“The most striking aspect of Nameth’s work is his use of the freeze-frame to generate a sense of timelessness. Stop-motion is literally the death of the image: we are instantly cut off from the illusion of cinematic life – the immediacy of motion – and the image suddenly is relegated to the motionless past, leaving in its place a pervading aura of melancholy. Chris Marker’s *La Jeté*, Peter Goldman’s *Echoes of Silence*, and Trauffaut’s *400 Blows* are memorable for the kind of stop-frame work that Nameth raises to quintessential beauty.”



“The final shots of Gerard Malanga tossing his head in slow motion and freezing in several positions create a ghostlike atmosphere, a timeless and ethereal mood that lingers and haunts long after the images fade. “



“My Mind Split Open”:

Andy Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable

Branden W. Joseph

At no point in time, no matter how utopian, will anyone win the masses over to a higher art; they can be won over only to one nearer to them.

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* [K3a,1]

In 1968 a fledgling critic by the name of Wayne McGuire sent an unsolicited article to *Crowdaddy!* magazine proclaiming the Velvet underground to be “*prophets of a new age, of breakthrough on an electronic; intermedia: total scale.*”¹ Describing them as “*the only true intermedia group in the country,*” McGuire situated them within the context of Andy Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable, or EPI, an overwhelming, expanded cinema production collaboratively orchestrated from 1966 to 1967.²

At the height of its development, the Exploding Plastic Inevitable included three to five film projectors, often showing different reels of the same film simultaneously; a similar number of slide projectors, movable by hand so that their images swept the auditorium; four variable-speed strobe lights; three moving spots with an assortment of colored gels; several pistol lights; a mirror ball hung from the ceiling and another on the floor; as many as three loudspeakers blaring different pop records at once; one or two sets by the Velvet underground and Nice; and the dancing of Gerard Malanga and Mary Woronov or Ingrid Superstar, complete with props and lights that projected their shadows high onto the wall. Advertisements for the EPI emphasized the variety of included effects, touting in addition to Warhol and the music:

*Superstars Gerard Malanga and Mary Woronov on Film on Stage on Vinyl: Live music. dancing. ultra sounds visions. lightworks by Daniel Williams; color slides by Jackie Cassen, discotheque, refreshments, Ingrid Superstar, food, celebrities, and movies, including: Vinyl, Sleep, Eat, Kiss, Empire, Whips, Faces, Harlot, Hedy, Couch, Banana, Blow Job, etc., etc-, etc, all in the same place at the same time.*³

The cumulative effect was one of disruptive multiplicity and layering, as the Velvet Underground, Nico, and other of Warhol’s superstars appeared amidst

the barrage of sounds, lights, images and performance. Critics who saw the shows consistently labeled the effect “decadence” or “perversion.”⁴ While, noting the showing of such anodyne films as *Eat* (1964), they more consistently pointed to such scenes as Malanga’s sadomasochistic re-programming in *Vinyl*, (1965); Mario Montez’s drag in films like *Harlot* (1964), and *More Milk*, *Yvette* (1965), the slyly allusive activity of *Blow Job* (1964); or the pornographic engagements in “*Couch*” (1964) - all accompanied by the Velvet Underground’s lengthy, atonal improvisations and dark, provocative songs like “*Heroin*,” “*Venus in Furs*,” and “*Sister Ray*.”⁵

“*It is no accident,*” noted McGuire, “*that the Velvet Underground was an organic element in Andy Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable.*” The now defunct Inevitable remains as the strongest and most developed example of intermedia art. Although productions...have since achieved greater technical dexterity on a visual plane, no one has yet managed to communicate a guiding spirit through the complex form as well as Warhol and the Underground.⁶

Elaborating on this guiding spirit, McGuire related Warhol to William S. Burroughs – as the “*two oracles*” of the time - and proceeded to explain that: “*Put in a nutshell, the real question is: how can we control and humanize an increasing uncontrollable and proliferating technology, an overpoweringly de-humanizing technology, when the value foundation for that attempted humanization is rapidly disintegrating and when the attempt by humans to control such power (who would be the master programmer?) would most certainly be corrupting in the extreme?*”⁷

McGuire was not alone in setting the EPI at the forefront of the development of intermedia artforms: in 1966 Jonas Mekas credited “*The Plastic Inevitables*” with being “*the loudest and most dynamic exploration platform*” for the new “*intermedia shows and groups.*”⁸

Nor was McGuire the only writer to relate the Exploding Plastic Inevitable to such social and technological developments. A few months later, Bob Stark of the Detroit underground paper *The Fifth Estate* published a more concise, but no less intriguing review of the Velvet Underground and Nico album.

Neglecting the conventional format of the record review or any attempt at qualitative evaluation. Stark was prompted instead to ask:

"Have you... ever considered what your role in society will be after the impending Cybernetic revolution?" Like McGuire, he then proceeded to relate Warhol and the Velvet Underground to Burroughs's "Nova Police," to *"the displacement of a traditional humanist subjectivity, and to the then unimaginable possibility of a future in which "everybody can have one computer or machine which he or she can sit and watch all day."* *"What will you (yes, YOU) do?"* he asked. *When machines do all the manual labor and computers run all the machines? On a much larger scale, how will you, as a part of society, be able to maintain your ego role as the Superior Being on Earth when machines have replaced you and all your work functions and can do a better job? And who will program the computers? You maybe? Or maybe you're elected representatives? Or maybe the computers themselves? Then what will you do?.....*

I can only suggest places to look which brings us to the subject of the article... The one group working in the context of Rock that presents a system which represents anything more than their own personal temporary answers to any of these questions is the Velvet Underground."⁹

If I am drawn to the testimony of Stark and McGuire to begin an analysis of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, it is not on account of their conclusions: far from it, neither one does, ultimately arrive at satisfactory answers to the provocative questions that they pose.¹⁰ Rather, it is for the manner in which their invocations of cybernetics. Automation, the dissolution of humanist subjectivity, and Burroughsian visions of social control foreground, with particular concision, a constellation of ideas that hovered insistently about Warhol's late-sixties production, his relationship to what one reviewer of a Warhol's tape-recorded novel from the same period, called *"a bizarre new class, untermenschen prefigurations of the technological millennium."*¹¹

But, I am also drawn to the fact that certain individuals, like Stark and McGuire, saw in the apparent darkness and chaos of the EPI a possibility of transformation, if not liberation, a possibility that was both within and somehow at odds with the general ethos of the sixties, one that was, in McGuire's words, *"bathed in a strange light, a demon light electric."*¹²

Far from Warhol's first foray into popular music, the Exploding Plastic Inevitable actually resulted from a longer line of related investigations. These began as far back as early 1963, when Warhol collaborated with Claes and Patti Oldenburg on an ill-fated attempt to form a rock band. This somewhat unlikely project included Patti Oldenburg as lead singer, Warhol and the artist Lucas Samaras as her back-ups (Warhol by his own admission, *"singing badly"*), the artists Larry Poons and Walter De Maria on guitar and drums, minimalist composer Monte Young on saxophone, and Jasper Johns, who was apparently enlisted to contribute the lyrics.¹³ Although Warhol could not remember the specific role played by Claes Oldenburg, the project appears to have been conceived along the lines of other of Oldenburg's performances such as *Sports* (1962) and *Store Days* (1961-62), earlier happening-type events that appropriated similar sites of popular spectacle and consumption. After only a few rehearsals, however, the project folded when Young, who unlike Warhol, did not share the Oldenburgs' interest in commercial culture, abandoned the group.¹⁴ Despite the theatricality and zen-like humor of Young's earlier, proto-fluxus pieces like *Piano Piece for David Tudor #1* (1960), in which a piano was fed a bale of hay, the minimalist aesthetic he was developing at the time staunchly opposed popular forms of amusement. As Young announced at the important series of concerts he organized at Yoko Ono's loft in 1960 and 1961, the purpose of his work was *"not entertainment."*¹⁵

Despite this apparently fundamental divide, Warhol and Young would enter into another collaboration in the fall of 1964. As a last-minute addition to the Second Annual New York Film Festival, Warhol had been invited to project a collection of his films, not in the theater, but in the mezzanine lobby of Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall.¹⁶ In response, Warhol produced an installation that featured excerpts from his films *Eat, Sleep* (1963), *Kiss* (1963-64) and *Haircut* (1963), each of which was shown individually on a separate Fairchild 400 projector, a machine that had been recently developed to enable easy home viewing by back-projecting 8mm film cartridges onto small television-sized screens.¹⁷

Warhol's film production had already been associated with commercial culture, either through his explicit adoption with commercial culture, either through

his explicit adoption of television as a model in, for instance, the unfinished film project *Soap Opera* (1964) or by using pop radio as a soundtrack to the premiere of *Sleep* - in the context of Lincoln Center, therefore, his choice of the small, back-lit Fairchild projectors initially appears as a characteristically conflation of cinema and TV.¹⁸

The promotional literature surrounding the event seems to reflect just such a position. Whereas the Festival promoted itself as the celebration of "a new cultural reality in New York: the belated and triumphant acceptance of film as high art," Warhol's participation was officially described as a "festival side show" and "extra-added attraction."¹⁹ Warhol, however, clearly regarded the marginalized and subordinate position accorded his films as a slight, one that he still resented bitterly over a decade and half later.²⁰

Warhol responded by adopting Young's minimalist strategy of reductive negation. By transferring a single, three-minute segment from each of his films onto the repeating loop cartridges, Warhol further reduced their already minimal variation and eliminated any appreciable development while extending their duration indefinitely by means of continuous repetition. As reported in a press release: "*The quartet of Warhol films, according to the artist's definition, are 'endless.'*"²¹ The soundtrack provided by Young complemented the installation's visuals perfectly. Realizing a version of his *Composition 1960 #9*, the score for which consists of a horizontal line, Young and Marian Zazeela performed a single sustained tone on a bowed brass mortar. Then, dubbing a separate but identical recording to accompany each of Warhol's films, Young had all four tapes broadcast simultaneously and at an earsplitting volume. In a manner similar to the "*continuous frequency environments*" or Dream Houses that Young would conceive at around the same time, the amplification of his soundtracks would not only have filled the lobby, but would have melded the four tones into an acoustical structure that interacted both with their surroundings and each other.²²

The result was a complex sonic environment of slowly shifting sound waves that replaced traditional compositional variation with the phenomenological interaction of listener and sound. Ambulant spectatores, enveloped within the sound and passing through different complexes of standing waves, would be-

come sensitized to the subtle acoustical differences audible at different points in space and thereby become cognizant of the role played by their own movements and perceptions in the production of the musical experience.²³ In this way the installation formed a semi-autonomous zone that acted to negate, rather than embrace, the realm of commercial culture, allowing for a consciousness of individual perception and an experience of bodily depth against the expropriating alienation of spectacle. Exemplifying a minimalist strategy of "reducing the stimulus to next to nothing," as Young's close associate, Robert Morris, summarized it, the installation "turned" the focus on the individual, as if to say, "whatever you got in the past you brought along anyway, so now really work at it."²⁴

Warhol's film loops operated in a similar manner. Their visual reduction and temporally extended repetition so minimized the aesthetic experience as to throw the viewer back onto an attentiveness to his or her own perceptual engagement with the work, thereby exemplifying Warhol's comment that his "first films using the stationary objects were...made to help the audience get more acquainted with themselves."²⁵ As with Young's music, this afforded a certain critical distance from the temporal and perceptual organization of spectacle, an organization Warhol once described in terms of "the same plots and the same shots and the same cuts over and over again" of "all the most popular action shows on TV." As he went on to explain; "Apparently most people love watching the same basic thing, as long as the details are different. But I'm just the opposite: if I'm going to sit and watch the same thing I saw the night before, I don't want it to be essentially the same - I want it to be exactly the same."²⁶

Despite his temporary artistic alliance with Young, Warhol would almost certainly have recognized in the strategies of minimalism a mimetic relation to the same logic of seriality that it denied.²⁷ Indeed, while each of Warhol's individual film loops displayed a stark, minimal repetition, the collection of the four projectors together amounted to differences in details, instantiating much the same logic of pseudo-differentiation that Warhol disparaged in commercial TV.

Situated at what Hal Foster has termed "*the crux of minimalism*," Warhol's Lincoln Center installation

occupied a pivotal, but ultimately provisional and perhaps fragile, moment of dialectical tension between a resistant, modernist autonomy and a postmodern aesthetic collapse into the expanded field being colonized by capital at that time.²⁸

Like the Oldenburgs' rock group project, Warhol's Lincoln Center installation would be short lived. For in addition to producing an environment of subtle acoustical interactions that could only be achieved through amplification, the volume of the installation's soundtracks staged an evident and aggressive intervention into the space of the Lincoln Center Festival. In an act that recalled the censorship of Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* at the 1964 New York World's Fair (which was painted over in silver at the instigation of the exhibitions organizers), officials at Lincoln Center immediately directed Young to reduce the volume. Realizing that its critical edge would be blunted and its integral minimalist aesthetic destroyed, Young reacted by withdrawing his soundtracks completely, leaving Warhol's loops running harmlessly on the Grand Promenade for the remainder of the festival.

In the first phase of his collaboration with the Velvet Underground (one of whose members, John Cale, had worked extensively with Young),²⁹ Warhol would exacerbate the dialectic put into play within his Lincoln Center installation, increasing the aggressive negation of popular spectacle even as his promotion of a rock group tied him to it all the more completely. Initially entitled "*Andy Warhol's Up-Tight*," the performance made its now infamous debut at a dinner for the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry held at Delmonico's Hotel on January 13, 1966. In that incarnation, in which Warhol screened several of his films before appearing on stage with the Velvet Underground, Nico, Edie Sedgwick, and Malanga, the incessant multimedia barrage of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable had not yet been fully implemented. Instead, once the concert began the audience found themselves subjected to the guerilla-type assaults of filmmaker Barbara Rubin, who, with the help of Jonas Mekas, thrust flood-lights and running movie cameras into their faces. Careening from table to table, Rubin and Mekas filmed the hapless psychiatrists' responses to blunt and embarrassing sexual questions such as "*Does he eat you out?*" or "*Is his penis big enough?*" and aggressively stated interjections like "*You're making too much noise.*"³⁰ These and other similarly filmed interventions by Rubin

played an integral role in all of the *Up-Tight* performances. The shock they effected was intended not only to destroy the audience's traditionally contemplative attitude toward the spectacle taking place on stage but also to make them – as exemplars of the bourgeois culture, norms and comportment-reveal themselves and the society of which they were a part as "up-tight."³¹ As John Wilcock noted of the group's appearance at Rutgers University on March 9, 1966, *There's something about authoritarian creeps which is triggered instantly by the tiniest glimmering of anarchistic freedom and Barbara Rubin exploits it ruthlessly. Her continuing cycle of day-by-day documentaries - she was busy filming now - is aptly entitled, the Uptight Series. It invariably depicts the helplessness of people who are blowing their cool, losing control.*³²

Already at Delmonico's the effect of such explicitly avant-garde interventions was to instantly and powerfully divide the representatives of the new culture from those of the old.³³ "*You want to do something for mental health?*" asked one of the enraged psychiatrists of a reporter for the New York Times, "*Kill the story.*"³⁴

Another, lesser-known, activity within the UpTight series reveals the group's interest in intervening in the mass media as one of the exemplary sites of bourgeois ideology. Instead of a concert this involved a disruptive and chaotic appearance by Warhol, Rubin, and members of the Velvet Underground and the East Village band The Fugs on David Susskind's television program. During the course of the show, Rubin and Danny Williams's filming, Ed Saunders's political advocacy of oral-genital relations, and Cale's languid caressing of Malanga with a cattle whip caused tile TV host to angrily lose his cool. Halfway through the taping, as Wilcock reported, "*Susskind is getting rattled. The roving cameramen, the disorderly group, the smell of pot, the occasional clicks, shrieks and catcalls from Barbara are apparently so much more than he expected.*"³⁵ Soon afterward, Susskind and his staff abruptly decided to cancel the second hour of the program.

In the later, more fully developed version of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, this aspect of direct, personal confrontation between performer and audience was replaced by the more encompassing, multimedia experience familiar to Stark and McGuire.

By the end of March, 1966, with the waning of Rubin's participation and the full development of the projections and light show, the term "up-tight" had come to take on a different meaning. As noted at the time by Ingrid Superstar, "*Uptight means to have so many different confusing things going on at one time, to attract or detract the audience's attention in order to confuse them and make them nervous. Sometimes it even makes us nervous.*"³⁷

To a certain extent, considerations such as those by Stark and McGuire had been prompted by Marshall McLuhan, who included the Exploding Plastic Inevitable in his popular pictographic handbook; *The Medium is the Massage* of 1967. As indicated on the subsequent two-page spread (illustrated with a Roy Lichtenstein-like, comic book "BANG"), the EPI represented the "auditory space" of electric media, which, as McLuhan explained, was *multidirectional, synesthetic, and interactive*, "*The ear favors no particular "point of view,"*" McLuhan observed, "*We are enveloped by sound. It forms a seamless web around us.*"³⁸

As he explained more precisely in an earlier article, "The Agenbite of Outwit," "*such an auditory space designated any pattern in which the components co-exist without direct lineal hook-up or connection, creating a field of simultaneous relations [which is auditory, even though some of its aspects can be seen]. They form a mosaic or corporate image whose parts are interpenetrating. Such is also the kind of order that tends to exist in a city or a culture. It is a kind of orchestral, resonating unity.*"³⁹

Prior to implicating the EPI, the privileged site of McLuhan's electronic space was television. Although the TV image was flat, the children of the electronic age, who sit in McLuhan's descriptions, with a characteristic closeness to the screen, were enveloped by the scanning electrons beamed forth from the cathode-ray tube, "bombarded," as McLuhan put it, "*by atoms that reveal the outside as inside in an endless adventure amidst blurred images and mysterious contours.*"⁴⁰

Within this all-encompassing, audio-visual environment, the flickering half-presence of television's (then) low level of resolution was seen to create a "mosaic" that called forth the spectators' "participatory" in-filling and a synesthetic, multisensory response. "*The TV image,*" McLuhan explained

in *Understanding Media*, "*requires each instant that we 'close' the spaces in the mesh by a convulsive sensuous participation that is profoundly kinetic and tactile.*"⁴¹

For McLuhan, the ultimate result of such electronic media was to be both the return to an organically "re-tribalized" global village "*where everything happens to everyone at the same time; [and] everyone knows about. and therefore participates in, everything that is happening the moment it happens,*"⁴² and an equally holistic transformation of the individual into "a complex and depth-structured person emotionally aware of his total interdependence with the rest of human society."⁴³ In an inverse, but no less ideological, appeal to the great "Family of Man," McLuhan's "tribal" imagery sought to naturalize the decade's thoroughly technological transformations (to such a point, in fact, that *The Medium is the Massage* illustrated this idea with Nat Farbman's photograph of Beschuana villagers from the famous exhibition by Edward Steichen).⁴⁴

To date, the reception of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable remains un-problematically tied to McLuhan's apologetics. In the book *Up-Tight*, Victor Bockris and Gerard Malanga declared that a "formal definition of the aims of the E.P.I.," could be found in McLuhan's statement that "*Our new [electronic] environment compels commitment and participation. We have become irrevocably involved with, and responsible for, each other.*"⁴⁵ More generally, Gene Youngblood claimed expanded cinema as "a paradigm for an entirely different kind of audiovisual experience, a tribal language that expresses not ideas but collective group consciousness."⁴⁶

Following McLuhan's claim of an impending return to self-presence, Youngblood further explained that "*We are tragically in need of a new vision: expanded cinema is the beginning of that vision, We shall be released. We will bring down the wall. We'll be reunited with our reflection.*"⁴⁷

By all accounts, however, viewers of the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* did not feel returned to tribal unity or subjective self-possession so much as uprooted and disoriented by the incessant bombardment of audiovisual shocks. Art Siedenbaum of the *Los Angeles Times* described it as "*like ducking in the midst of shrapnel, not knowing what's hitting next from where.*"⁴⁸ Another reporter noted more precisely

and dispassionately that "[i]t's a dislocation of the senses - a breaking down of ordinary responses."⁴⁹ "At a slight distance," wrote reviewer Michaela Williams, "the Exploding Plastic Inevitable seems like a Fun Machine. People move into it and become nothing more than parts of it, receptors essential to its functioning but subordinate to it and manipulated by it."⁵⁰ "He has indeed put together a total environment," she later declared of Warhol, but it is an assemblage that actually vibrates with menace, cynicism and perversion. To experience it is to be brutalized, helpless ...The strobe lights blaze, spots dart, flickering pistol lights start in on [the audience] and their humanness is destroyed; they are fragments, cutouts waiving Reynolds Wrap reflectors to ward off their total disintegration. "Eventually," she concluded, in lines that the group would quote gleefully in subsequent advertisements, "the reverberations in your ears stop. But what do you do with what you still hear in your brain? The Flowers of Evil are in full bloom with the Exploding Plastic Inevitable; let's hope it's killed before it spreads."⁵¹

Without mentioning McLuhan, George Maciunas's 1966 "Expanded Arts Diagram" traced the genealogy of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable from International Expositions and World Fairs, to Disney-esque spectacles, to the multiple screen projections of Expanded Cinema, a category headed by the name of Charles Eames.⁵² Indeed, in 1964, the year before the Cinematheque's first "Expanded Cinema Festival" -the publication of McLuhan's *Understanding Media* would likely have been overshadowed by Charles and Ray Eameses' THINK presentation in the IBM Pavilion at the New York world's Fair. The Eameses' audience, lifted hydraulically before a vast, hemispherical wall of movie and slide projections, was bombarded by information at a pace too rapid to be fully absorbed. More so than television, the THINK installation, with its literal mosaic of screens, its fragments of information, and its synesthetic, or at least multi-sensory, engagement, exemplified McLuhan's descriptions of an "auditory" electronic space.

Although lacking the full visceral impact of the EPI, visitors nonetheless found the IBM pavilion "occasionally confusing," "frustrating," and "too fragmented to be entirely successful."⁵³ In his *Movie Journal*, Jonas Mekas described the experience as "A very busy performance (-) confused, overcrowded, perfectly un-functional, and, I would dare say, silly."

⁵⁴ In part, such disorientation attests to the displacement of earlier forms of more focused spectacular attentiveness established with the sound film.⁵⁵

Like the Eameses' 1959 installation, "Glimpses of the USA" (reproduced in the same issue of *Film Culture* as Maciunas's "Expanded Arts" graph), the IBM Pavilion was a privileged site of the type of perceptual retraining that Jonathan Crary has revealed as integral to capitalism's dynamic of de- and re-territorialization. The "IBM information machine," as the installation was called, sought to naturalize the newly developing, technologically mediated modes of absorbing the augmented speeds and diversity of stimuli within an emerging information economy. These modes of subjective assimilation were now to be claimed as actually truer to human perception. Although "the pace of the show," as one observer recalled, "is so fast that a person does not have enough time to weed out what he wants to see or not see, the tuxedoed IBM "host" explained that the installation actually "brings you information in much the same way as your mind gets it - in fragments and glimpses - sometimes relating to the same idea or incident. Like making toast in the morning."⁵⁶

THINK derived from years of the Eameses' research into the most effective means of communicating multiple stimuli.⁵⁷ According to Beatriz Colomina, they had found that the "awareness of relationships between seemingly unrelated phenomena [was] achieved by 'high speed techniques' that 'produce an excessive input from different directions that has to be synthesized by the audience.'" The IBM pavilion, channeling the newly emerging dislocating effects of electronic technology to the contemporary operations of commercial mass media, rendered the audiences "impulse" to make connections," as Colomina observes, into a form of "participation," the desired result of which was to surpass intellectual engagement in favor of an "emotional response, produced as much by the excess of images as [by] their content."⁵⁸

While McLuhan generally presented such an interactive participation as leading to the holism of the global village, the controlling effect of this new mode of distraction was not entirely absent from his discussions either. Although apparently unable to elucidate its significance fully, he nonetheless broached it toward the end of *Understanding Media*. "In the course of many studies of audience reactions to TV

teaching," McLuhan observed, "there recurs this puzzling fact. The viewers feel that the teacher has a dimension almost of sacredness. This feeling does not have its basis in concepts or ideas, but seems to creep in uninvited and unexplained. It baffles both the students and the analysts of their reactions. Surely, there could be no more telling touch to tip us off to the character of TV. This is not so much a visual as a tactual-auditory medium that involves all of our senses in depth interplay. For people long accustomed to the merely visual experience of the typographic and photographic varieties, it would seem to be the synesthesia, or tactual depth of TV experience, that dislocates them from their usual attitudes of passivity and detachment."⁵⁹

As in the IBM pavilion, then, the "participatory" closing of an auditory, mosaic space – the individual's connection of diverse, fragmentary bits of information – actually produces a more active form of suture, an identification with and subjection to the electronic image. "Potentially," remarked McLuhan, television "can transform" the Presidency into a monarchic dynasty. A merely elective presidency scarcely affords the depth of dedication and commitment demanded by the TV form."⁶⁰

For both McLuhan and the Eameses the forms of perceptual training and interpellation produced by electronic media were understood to bypass conscious assimilation in order to impact sub-individual or automatic processes. Seen from this perspective, the mutual, participatory involvement and proximity within the global village -the contact over distance allowed by electronic communication -reveals itself as a subjective permeability to external forces of signification. In a 1964 review of the conflictual, electronic battlegrounds of Naked Lunch and Nova Express, McLuhan's habitual discourse underwent a highly symptomatic rupture, temporarily drawing back the ideological veil of tribalization to reveal the more nefarious dimensions of this electronic space. Burroughs, he noted, presents "a paradigm of a future in which there can be no spectators but only participants. All men are totally involved in the insides of all men. There is no privacy and no private parts. In a world in which we are all ingesting and digesting one another there can be no obscenity or pornography nor decency. Such is the law of electric media, which stretch the nerves to form a global membrane of enclosure."⁶¹

It is certainly a coincidence that Warhol charac-

terized Pop art using terms that recall McLuhan's descriptions of television and electronic space, as "taking the outside and putting it on the inside or taking the inside and putting it on the outside."⁶² Yet it is, I would suggest, this dimension of the global village, its spatial and subjective inter-penetration, that was modeled by the Exploding Plastic Inevitable. Within it spectators became keenly aware of the sub-individual transformations effected by media technologies.⁶³ Surpassing then current perceptual norms more intensely than had the IBM Pavilion, the EPI formed a similarly enveloping "membrane of enclosure," a vast electronic environment, the space or which Warhol momentarily even contemplated furnishing with individual television sets on every table.⁶⁴

In his 1967 Introduction to the American Underground Film, Sheldon Renan explicitly defined "expanded cinema" in terms of the dissolution of the medium: it was, in his words, "cinema expanded to the point at which the effect of film may be produced without the use of film at all."⁶⁵ More recently, Rosalind Krauss has described the related historical development of television and the advent of such intermedia arts. The artistic adoption of the Portapak video recorder, she explains in the essay "A Voyage on the North Sea", effectively extinguished the modernist practice of structural film and "shatter(ed) the notion of medium-specificity," opening onto a "post-medium" condition where aesthetics and capital could permeate all aspects of culture.⁶⁶

Far from a postmodern concession of oppositional art; however, Krauss appealed to Walter Benjamin's idea of allegorical appropriation to argue that "it is precisely the onset of higher orders of technology... which allows us, by rendering older techniques outmoded, to grasp the inner complexity of the mediums those techniques support."⁶⁷ For an artist like Marcel Broodthaers, she explains, the late-sixties advent of television, electronics, and intermedia prompted a Benjaminian recovery of early, artisanal film as "a medium whose specificity is to be found in its condition as self-differing."⁶⁸

Warhol's earliest films, like *Sleep*, *Kiss*, or *Empire*, which Broodthaers might have seen in Belgium at the Experimental Film Festival in Knokke-le-Zoute, have long been related to both the recuperation of early cinema and the development of structural film.⁶⁹ Neither interest, however, characterizes the EPI.

For far from redeeming earlier cinematic models the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, which Mekas described as "all Here and Now and the Future,"⁷⁰ employed Warhol's films as components of an intermedia space with all the impure promiscuity that Krauss ascribes to television: "a discursive chaos, a heterogeneity of activities that could not be theorized as coherent or conceived of as having something like an essence or unifying core."⁷¹

Yet the appropriation of an outmoded medium was only one of the oppositional strategies theorized by Benjamin, who similarly regarded the moment of a technology's emergence as dialectical, in the famous "Work of Art" essay and the Arcades Project, Benjamin described technologies - "at historical turning points"⁷² - as developing within social and subjective complexes of perceptual modalities and habitual actions. The largely unconsciously developed habits that emerged with the advent of new technologies and that came to the fore in artistic modes of distraction, he argued, could be channeled in either progressive or reactionary directions, mobilized through identification with either proletarian workers or with Hollywood stars and Fuhrer cults. While aware of the latter, regressive outcomes, Benjamin nonetheless defended the possibility of anticipatory, artistic operations to reveal (as in a dream) the repressed potentials of these unconscious aspects of subject formation.⁷³ At the moment of its emergence, early film, he maintained, performed two oppositional functions: expressing the institutional sedimentation of habitual actions, and revealing within them repressed or hidden potentials.⁷⁴ Bursting asunder the offices, factories, and other "prison-worlds" of institutional power, cinematic dis-junctions (as anticipated by Dadaist montage) revealed "entirely new structural formations" of the depicted subject and opened onto new possibilities and articulations.⁷⁵ "On the one hand," he explained of this optical unconscious, "film furthers insight into the necessities governing our lives by its use of close-ups, by its accentuation of hidden details in familiar objects, and by its exploration of commonplace milieux through the ingenious guidance of the camera: on the other hand, it manages to assure us of a vast and unsuspected field of action [Spielraum]." "⁷⁶

In 1935, Theodor Adorno would find Benjamin's theory of distraction unconvincing. Yet Benjamin's argument was largely confined to the cinema of the twenties: and while he would concede that the ad-

vent of sound film had delivered the political promise of early cinema to the forces of fascism and capital, he firmly defended the "revolutionary primacy of the silent film." At its emergence, he maintained, a new technology incites a mixture of "reactions that [are] hard to control and hence politically dangerous" to instituted powers.⁷⁸ While such reactions only become progressive or reactionary in the artistic and sociological assemblages that they form, it is their initial, ambiguous duality that the anticipatory artist must be given to understand. "The artist," as Gilles Deleuze summarized, glossing Benjamin by means of Hans-Jurgen Syberberg, "is always in the situation of saying simultaneously: I claim new methods, and I am afraid that the new methods may invalidate all will to art, or make it into a business, a pornography, a Hitlerism."⁸⁰

Responding to contemporary economic and sociological developments, the mid-sixties saw the earlier, spectacular regime of perception that had emerged with the sound film giving way to new forms of electronic information. It was at this historical turning point that Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable emerged to contest ideological naturalizations of the type posed by McLuhan and the Eameses.⁸¹

Forming a contradictory, experimental space, the EPI trafficked in emergent technological forces still lingering on the thresh-old before their complete subsumption within the market.⁸² As opposed to naturalization, the EPI produced a dislocating, environmental montage where different media interfered and competed with one another, accelerating their distracting, shock-like effects to produce the three-dimensional, multimedia equivalent of a *moiré*. Such was described by reviewer Larry McCombs, who noted the manner in which "[t]he lights have become a dim blue flicker, but a flicker that goes faster and slower and pauses now and then, just as your eyes get used to each kind of flicker." "Too much happening," he continued: It doesn't go together. But sometimes it does suddenly the beat of the music the movements of the various films, the pose of the dancers, blend into something meaningful, but before your mind can grab it, it's become random and confusing again. Your head tries to sort something out, make sense of something. The noise is getting to you. You want to scream, or throw yourself about with the dancers, something, anything."⁸³

The EPI, as Wayne McGuire noted, rejected the many *"false resolutions"* of the time, refusing both McLuhan's rhetoric of re-tribalization and the Eameses' attempted naturalization onto images of nuclear families and morning toast. Instead, Warhol's multi-media presentation linked contemporary, capital-driven, technological dislocations with more volatile forms of social and libidinal transformations, signaled in part by the *"decadent"* contents of both his films and the lyrics of The Velvet Underground.⁸⁴



This was indeed *"a demon light electric,"* an ambiguous and threatening form of de-territorialization, played out to the volume, feedback, length, and shifting tempos of a music that failed (in extended bouts of dissonant improvisation) to cohere comfortably within the norms of popular spectacle. Within this environment, however, identifications were not disarticulated entirely into some kind of postmodern flux: the EPI was not simply a bricolage of existing signifiers, practices, and codes.⁸⁵



Rather, it formed a multiplicitous situation or "image" in which the possibilities of subjective transformation were opened to forms of political appropriation. Not primarily by the proletarian mass or the official, often essentialist counterculture, but by delinquents, drag queens, addicts, and hustlers: a *"group,"* as Kathy Acker observed about the Factory, *"who at that time no decent person, not even a hippy, would recognize as being human."* It was a group, however, that would later emerge within punk and as a politicized gay sub-culture.⁸⁶



In 1967, therefore, as artists such as Robert Smithson, Dan Graham, and Mel Bochner were exploring Post-industrial suburban landscapes and the serialized pages of magazines, Warhol was not simply touring the country with a rock band but was occupying the newly emerging spaces of information.⁸⁷ Rather than merely capitalizing on them, however, the Exploding Plastic Inevitable acted to articulate these zones within the taut ambiguities of a contemporary dream image, one that would be seized upon by emergent forces of sub-cultural resistance.

Today, at the outset of the twenty-first century, Warhol's formerly futuristic *"brutal assemblage"* has no doubt itself become outmoded....Yet, in its time the EPI mobilized the conflictual, de-territorialized forces of electronic media toward the explosion of a newly developing, post-institutional prison-world amongst the far-flung debris of which some, at least, would find it possible - less calmly, perhaps, but no less adventurously - to go travelling.⁸⁸

Notes

- Wayne McGuire, "The Boston Sound," *Crawdaddy* August 1968; reprinted in *The Velvet Underground Companion: Four Decades of Commentary*, ed. Albin Zak III, New York, Schirmer Books, 1997, p. 18.
- McGuire, "The Boston Sound," p.25. The last Velvet Underground concert to be associated with the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* seems to have occurred in May of 1967 at Steve Paul's Scene in New York City. The final performances with Nico occurred at the Boston Tea Party in Boston on May 26-27, 1967. Concert posters show that the group continued to be billed as "Andy Warhol's Velvet Underground," however, until at least July 1967. The *San Francisco Oracle* apparently ran a small advertisement announcing "The [sic] Andy Warhol's [PI] with The Velvet Underground" for a December 20, 1967 performance at The Cinematheque Coffeehouse Palace of Pleasure, but there seems to be no mention of the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* in 1968. For dates and a history of the Velvet Underground and the [PI], see Victor Bockris and Gerard Malanga, *Up-Tight: The Velvet Underground Story*. London, Omnibus Books, 1983. See also the concert and poster listing on The Velvet Underground Web Page, available at http://members.aol.com/olandem_vu.html.
- Advertisement for "Andy Warhol's Velvet Underground and Nico" at 23 St. Mark's Place [The Dom], *East Village Other*, April 15, 1966. p.5. For some of the most informative (although not always positive) descriptions of the EPI, see Bockris and Malanga; John Wilcock, "A 'High' School of Music and Art," *East Village Other*, April 15, 1966. P.5; Paul Jay Robbins, "Andy Warhol and the Night on Fire," *Los Angeles Free Press*, May 13, 1966, p.12; Michaela Williams, "Warhol's Brutal Assemblage: Non-Stop Horror Show," *Chicago Daily News*, June 22, 1966, p. 34; and Barry Lord, "Velvet Underground in Hamilton," *Arts Canada* 105 (February 1967): pp. 15-17.
- See Timothy Jacobs, "The Velvet Underground," *Vibrations* 2 (July 1967), n.p.; Kevin Kelly, "O, Andy, How Sad," unattributed clipping [review of EPI performance at the ICA, Boston, October 29, 1966], *Scrapbook* vol.2 Small, p.1, Archives Study Center, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Penn. [hereafter cited as Warhol Archive]; Richard Mortiglioglio, "The Velvet Underground and Nico," *The Velvet Underground Companion*, pp.57-62; Robbins, p.12; and Williams, "Warhol's Brutal Assemblage," p.34.
- It is important to note that in performance with the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, much of The Velvet Underground's set consisted of long, dissonant improvisations (often erroneously described in reviews as tuning up) much different from the songs heard on the released albums. Known by such titles as "*Melody Laughter*" or "*The Nothing Song*," these improvisations often took up more than half of an evening's performance. See, for instance, the recording of the full EPI performance at the Valleydale Ballroom in Columbus, Ohio on November 4, 1966, released on CD as *If It's too Loud for You Move Back!* An excerpt of the Valleydale Ballroom performance of "*Melody Laughter*" was included on disk two of the five CD set, *Peel Slowly and See* (Polygram 31452 7077-2). This cut, unfortunately, falsifies the effect by editing the over twenty-eight-minute improvisation into a ten-minute and forty-three-second format more closely resembling a conventional song structure. Such experimental improvisations by The Velvet Underground are similar to John Cale's former associate, Cornelius Cardew's contemporary work in London with the free-noise improvisational group AMM. Compare, for example, the improvisations at the Valleydale Ballroom with those on *AMM Music 1966* (Matchless Recordings).
- McGuire, "The Boston Sound," p.24.
- Ibid.* p.21.
- Jonas Mekas, "On the Plastic Inevitables and the Strobe Light" (May 26, 1966), *Movie Journal: The Rise of a New American Cinema, 1959-1971*. New York, Macmillan, 1972. p.242. This article is also cited by McGuire.
- Bob Stark, "The Velvet Underground," *The Fifth Estate*, November 14, 1968, p.11. Stark almost certainly also had the context of the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* in mind. The EPI had been well-received in the Detroit-Ann Arbor area where it played some four times in 1966-1967. The *Fifth Estate* had previously reported on Warhol and the Velvet's appearance at the Michigan "Mod Wedding" ("Warhol Here for Mod Wedding," *The Fifth Estate*, November 15, 1966, p.2).
- In the face of their own observations both Stark and McGuire end up advocating variants of direct action liberationism, that their meditations on technology would seem to preclude. For his part, Stark would concede that "I know a lot of questions but only a few answers." In McGuire's case, his provocative characterization of the EPI is somewhat undermined by a typical 1960's mysticism and an affirmation of the possibility of experiencing, in music, "pure essence and perpetual presence," tellingly connected with an interest in the writing of Mel Lyman, later an "acid fascist" commune leader, but who worked for a time with Jonas Mekas (McGuire, "The Boston Sound," p.23). In the 1966 "Expanded Arts" issue of *Film Culture*, Lyman is listed as available for "A full evening show alone or together with [Eben Siven, Ronna Page, Jonas Mekas, light, images, voice, human presence." (*Film Culture* 43 [1966]: n.p.).
- Robert Maizocco, "aaaaaa..."
- McGuire, "The Boston Sound," p.22.
- On the rock band project, see Glenn O'Brien, "Andy Warhol: Interview," *High Times*, August 1977, p.34 (partially quoted in Victor Bockris and Malanga, *Up-Tight*, p.25). Patti Oldenburg, quoted in Victor Bockris, *Warhol*, New York, Da Capo, 1997, p.147; and La Monte Young, "Question à La Monte Young," *Andy Warhol, Cinema*, ed. Bernard Blistene, et al. Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1990, p.55. Additional information, including the project's date and its connection to the context of happenings, derives from the unpublished transcript of an interview with La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela by Legs McNeil and Gillian Mc Cain. New York City, 1995. I am thankful to Legs McNeil for providing me with a copy of this interview.
- Young's departure after a couple of rehearsals is noted in Blistene, *Andy Warhol, Cinema*, p.55, as well as McNeil and McCain. Although he does not give a specific reason for the group's breakup, Warhol recalled that "We met ten times, and there were fights between Lucas and Patti over the music or something" (Glenn O'Brien, "Andy Warhol: Interview," p.34. repr. in Bockris and Malanga, *Up-Tight*, p.25).
- Cited in K. Robert Schwarz, *Minimalists*, London, Phaidon, 1996, p.32. Young's statement referred to all of the series' performances.
- For accounts of this installation, see David Bourdon, *Warhol*, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1989, p.190; Young, "Question à La Monte Young," p.55; Eugene Archer, "Festival Bringing Pop Artist's Films to Lincoln Center," *New York Times*, September 12, 1964, p.15; and Joseph Gelms, "Russian Hamlet" Shown as Film Festival Opens," *New York Newsday*, September 15, 1964.
- Warhol's copies of the advertisement for the Cine Magnetes Inc. Fairchild 400 projector and instructions for its use are preserved in Time Capsule 65, Warhol Archives. Callie Angell, head of The Warhol Film Project, has determined that the excerpt from *Haircut* was from what is now designated *Haircut* (No. 2), and not *Haircut* (No. 1), which has been preserved and is currently in circulation.
- On the relation of Warhol's films to television, see Callie Angell, "Andy Warhol, Filmmaker," The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, 1994, pp.139-140. On the inclusion of a radio at the premiere of *Sleep*, see Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II*, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1994, p.11. The Fairchild 400's resemblance to television is noted both in the advertisement found in Time Capsule 65, and in "Festival Side Show," one-page, typed press release, in Time Capsule 37, Warhol Archives. This last document describes Warhol's film excerpts as lasting twenty minutes. Given the unanimity of the other descriptions of the installation, however, this twenty-minute loop, which was the capacity of a full film cassette, likely consisted of the shorter, repeated film segments.
- "Festival Side Show"; and Amos Vogel, "Film at Lincoln Center" three-page, typed press release, copy located in the Billy Rose Theater Collection, Performing Arts Library, New York Public Library, file "Festivals-Cinema-U.S.-N.Y.-1964."
- See Warhol's comments in Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *Popism: The Warhol Sixties*, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980, p.21. It wouldn't have helped matters that Jean-Luc Goddard, with whom Warhol seems to have felt some rivalry, had not one but two films, *A Woman is a Woman* and *Bond a' Port*, screened as part of the festival.
- "Festival Side Show."
- La Monte Young references *Dream Houses* in "from concert program notes, 1964," in La Monte Young and Marianne Zazeela, *Selected Writings*, Munich, Heiner Friedrich, 1969, n.p. In another text dating from 1969, Young and Zazeela date the concept to 1962 (Young and Zazeela, *Selected Writings*, n.p.).
- As Young and Zazeela explained of the analogous situation in their *Dream Houses*: "When a continuous frequency is sounded in an enclosed space such as a room, the air in the room is arranged into high and low pressure areas. In the high-pressure areas the sound is louder, and in the low-pressure areas the sound is softer. Since a sine wave has only one frequency component, the pattern of high and low pressure areas is easy to locate in space. Further, concurrently sounding sine waves of different frequencies will provide an environment in which the loudness of each frequency will vary audibly at different points in the room, given sufficient amplification. This phenomenon can rarely be appreciated in most musical situations and makes the listener's position and movement in the space an integral part of the sound composition." ("Dream House," Young and Zazeela, *Selected Writings*, n.p.).
- Robert Morris, "Letters to John Cage," October, 81 (Summer 1997), p.73.
- Gretchen Berg, "Nothing to Lose: An Interview with Andy Warhol" (1967). Andy Warhol: Film Factory, ed. Michael O'Pray. London, British Film Institute, 1989, p.58.
- Warhol and Hackett, 50 (emphasis in original). Here and throughout, my discussion of "spectacle" is, of course, made in reference to Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*. trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, New York, Zone Books, 1995.
- This would have been clear, for example, in the relationship between Warhol's installation of *Brillo* and other box sculptures at the Stable Gallery in 1964 and the serial objects developed by Minimalist sculptors.
- Hal Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism," *The Return of the Real*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1996.

- 29 John Cale worked with La Monte Young, Marian Zazezela and Tony Conrad as part of the *Theatre of Eternal Music* from 1963 through the end of 1965. Judging from "Loop," the first recording issued by The Velvet Underground, it was at least in part Cale's relationship to the minimalist aesthetic that interested Warhol in the group. "Loop," released on side two of the flexi-disk included in the "Fab" issue of *Aspen Magazine* co-edited by Warhol, was composed and probably realized almost exclusively by Cale (*Aspen Magazine* 1.3 [December, 1966]: n.p.). To a degree far beyond even the most experimental of the group's other releases, "Loop" exemplifies the minimalist aesthetic with which Young and Cale were involved. Seven and a half minutes of continuously undulating feedback, "Loop" ends with a locked groove which—like the film loops in Warhol's Lincoln Center installation—extends the duration of the piece indefinitely by means of repetition. (Cale's "Loop" is the prototype for Lou Reed's later two-album *Metal Machine Music* of 1975, which also ended with a repeating locked groove.) A slightly earlier instrumental improvisation by The Velvet Underground entitled "Noise" was included as a part of a sound collage in the "Electric Newspaper" issue of the *East Village Other* recorded on August 6, 1966 and released as ESP-Disk 1034. The Velvets contribution in well-held within the audio collage.
30. On the performance at Delmonico's, see Warhol and Hackett, *Papism*, p. 147; Grace Glueck, *Syndromes Pop* at Delmonico's, "New York Times, January 14, 1966; and Seymour Krim, "Andy Warhol's 'Velvet Underground': Shock Treatment for Psychiatrists." *New York Herald Tribune*, January 14, 1966. See also accounts of the performance *Andy Warhol-Uptight* at the Filmmakers' Cinematheque in New York, which took place February 8-13, 1966. Archer Winston, "Reviewing Stand: Andy Warhol at Cinematheque," *New York Post*, February 9, 1966; Bosley Crowther, "The Screen: Andy Warhol's *More Milk, Yvette Bows*," *New York Times*, February 9, 1966, p.32 and "Reprinted from the Fire Island News," Andy Warhol et al., *Andy Warhol's Index (Book)*, New York, Random House, 1967, n.p. The Filmmakers' Cinematheque press release for this event describes a screening of Warhol's film *More Milk, Yvette* to be accompanied by an appearance of The Velvet Underground and Nico, Edie Sedgwick, Gerard Malanga and Barbara Rubin. (This listing is, no doubt, the source of the widespread but erroneous idea that The Velvet Underground provided the soundtrack to *More Milk, Yvette*.) Crowther's review indicates that *More Milk, Yvette* was shown in double-screen projection with Warhol's film, *The Velvet Underground*, followed by a double-screen showing of *Lupe*. The event is described in the press release as "the second in the projected UP-TIGHT series, the first of which was held at the psychiatrists convention at the Delmonico Hotel in January or February, 1966. Anthology Film Archives, New York, file "Warhol, Andy Prog. Notes, Pres rel.,".)
- 31 I am using the term *bourgeois* with regards to Rubin's activities advisedly, in reference to what seem to be the specifically historical avant-garde underpinnings of her interventions.
- 32 John Wilcock, "On the Road with the Exploding Plastic Inevitable," *The Autobiography and Sex Life of Andy Warhol*, New York, Other Scenes, 1971, n.p.
- 33 See Van M. Cagle's discussion of the Delmonico's event in Cagle, *Reconstructing Pop/Subculture: Art, Rock, and Andy Warhol*. Thousand Oaks, Cal., Sage, 1995, pp.4-8.
- 34 Cited in Glueck.
- 35 John Wilcock, "Other Scenes," *East Village Other*, February 15, 1966, p.4. Wilcock's article reports this event in detail. At the bottom of the accompanying photograph, in which Cale and Malanga are clearly visible, the caption identifies the event as "Barbara Rubin. The Uptight Series."
- 36 One notable release into a directly confrontational style occurred in Ann Arbor, where "someone yelled 'Andy Warhol's queer' and got hit ten times with the blinding (spot) light. Warhol never smiled once" (David Freedman, "Andy Warhol and the Plastic Quadrangle," unattributed clipping, Scrapbook Vol. 10 Large, p.72, Warhol Archives).
- 37 Ingrid Superstar, "Movie Party at the Factory: A Trip and a Half," one-page typed manuscript, dated March 26, 1966. Time Capsule -7, Warhol Archives (punctuation slightly altered). The first phase of the EPI, which I have been referencing under the title *Up-Tight* seems to have come to an end in March 1966, concurrently with the adoption of a more intense use of strobe lights. Warhol reports that strobes were initially used at the group's first appearance in Ann Arbor (Bockris and Malanga, *Up Tight*, p.29). This occurred as a part of the Fourth Ann Arbor Film Festival at the University of Michigan on March 12, 1966. In posters for this performance, however, it was still billed as "Up-Tight" with Andy Warhol. See Ingrid Superstar's description in *Ibid*, p. 29. The title "Exploding Plastic Inevitable" seems to have debuted during the April, 1966 performances at the Dom on St. Mark's Place in New York.
- 38 Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, n.p. (emphasis in original).
- 39 Marshall McLuhan, "The Agenbite of Outwit" (1963), *Media Research: Technology, Art, Communication*, Amsterdam, G+B Arts International, 1997, pp. 123-124.
- 40 Marshall McLuhan, "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man," New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964, p.327.
- 41 *Ibid*, p. 314.
- 42 McLuhan, "The Agenbite of Outwit," p. 124.
- 43 McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, pp. 50-5'.
- 44 The Farbman image reproduced in *The Medium is the Message* to illustrate the phrase "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village" is taken from Edward Steichen, *The Family of Man*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, '955, p. 120.
- 45 Bockris and Malanga, *Up, - Tight*, p. 36; see also pp. 26 and 42.
- 46 Gene Youngblood, *Exponed Cinema*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1970, p. 387.
- 47 *Ibid*" p. 49. Tellingly, Youngblood avoids a direct discussion of the EPI in favor of Ronald Nameth's film of the performance, which effectively tames the overall effect (*Ibid*" pp. 102-105). Nameth's film is perceptively characterized by Richard Whitehall: "From Warhol's *intermedia*, the sharp cry of pain and desperation which seems to be the heart of all his work, Nameth has employed a pulsation of light and sound to modulate an event into an abstraction." (Whitehall, "Nameth/Warhol Replace Arc with Strobe," *Los Angeles Free Press*, January 5, 1968, p. 16).
- 48 Art Seidenbaum, "Andy Peacemaker Puts a New Complexion on Night life," *Los Angeles Times Calendar*, May 15, 1966, p. 3.
- 49 Susy Dooley, "An 'Experience' - Warhol Version," un-attributed clipping [review of first Chicago show at Poor Richard's, 1966]. Scrapbook Vol.10 Large, p.70. Warhol Archives. See also Jonas Mekas's comments on the fragmentation of the ego in "On the Plastic Inevitable," p.242; and Stephen Koch's description of the EPI, *Stargazer- The Life, World and Films of Andy Warhol*, 2nd ed. New York, Marion Boyars, 1991, pp. 70-72.
- 50 Michaela Williams, *'Andy Warhol and His Marvelous Fun Machine*," unattributed clipping [review of first Chicago show at Poor Richard's, 1966]. Scrapbook, Vol.10 Large, p.62. Warhol Archives.
- 51 Michaela Williams, "Warhol's Brutal Assemblage," p.34. Compare with the advertisement, "Andy Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable Returns" *Village Voice*, 29 September 1966, p.22 (the final seven words of the Williams quotation are omitted).
- 52 *Film Culture* 43, special issue on "Expanded Arts" (1966), n.p. As we shall see, Maciunas's perceptive notation of Warhol's relationship to "exhibitionism, sadism, perversion, sex, etc." is not unimportant.
- 53 Mina Hamilton, "Films at the Fair 2," *Industrial Design*, May 1964, pp. 36-38; quoted in Pat Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1995, pp. 325,328.
- 54 Jonas Mekas, "Movies at the World's Fair" *July 9,1964*; reproduced in *Film Culture* 43 (1966), n.p.
- 55 On the relation of spectacle to the conjunction of sound and vision in the sound film and early television, see Jonathan Crary, "Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory," *October*, 50 (Fall 1989), pp. 97-107. It is part of the argument of this article that the transformations that Crary sees in television in the 1970's begin to be visible within the culture at this moment in the mid-1960's. On the transformation in television, see Jonathan Crary, "Eclipse of the Spectacle." *Art after Modernism; Rethinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis, Boston, David R. Godine, 1984, pp. 283-294.
- 56 Mina Hamilton, "Films at the Fair 2," pp. 36-38; quoted in Kirkham, 325, and IBM 'host," quoted in Beatriz Colomina, "Enclosed by Images; The Eameses' Multimedia Architecture," *Grey Room*, 2 (Winter 2001), p. 20.
- 57 See Colomina, "Enclosed by Images"; and Sheldon Renan, *An Introduction to the American Underground Film*, New York, E.P. Dutton and Co. 1967, pp. 229-233.
- 58 Colomina, "Enclosed by Images," pp. 19,23. Colomina relates the Eameses' installations to the media on p.20.
- 59 McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p.336 (emphasis in original).
- 60 *Ibid*, 336. Reviewer Art Seidenbaum sensed a similar dimension in the multi-sensory impact of the EPI. "Andy (Warhol) is providing the stimulus for us," he wrote, "our rock, our master. All we have to be is passive, the empty vacuum bags which he will fill with his genius" (Seidenbaum, "Andy Peacemaker" p. 3)' The student reviewers from Columbia University, however, saw more clearly the distinction between the EPI and the strategies of identification at work in multimedia events more directly aligned with capital. As they wrote laconically in contrasting the EPI with Murray the K's World, "Inside, the screens carry photos and movies of Murray, Murray with a motorcycle, and the Playboy/Bunny softball team. Soon there is a shot of the team with Murray." Calling Murray the K's World a "vener, a thin covering over Murray's real talent: making money," they concluded that, "Warhol still has the best entertainment in New York" (Mitch Susskind and Leslie Gottesman, "Keep Your Cool; An Exploding World" *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 27, 1966). It is worth noting that Murray the K's World (which cynically announced that the individual [presumably other than Murray] is the focal point") was explicitly based on McLuhan's ideas about electronic media (Jane Tamerin, "Sights and Sounds of the New Night Life," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 17, 1966, p.14).

61 Marshall McLuhan, "Notes on Burroughs" (1964), *Media Research*, p. 89.

62 Warhol, quoted in Berg, "Nothing to Lose," p.57. Hal Foster has also noted this quotation, making an argument about Warhol's place within a "pathological public sphere" that is relevant to the arguments about the space of electronic media developed below (Foster, "Death in America," *October*, 75 [Winter 1996], pp. 37-59).

63 Reporter David Freedman, for instance, described spending days following a performance 'trying to recover his sensibilities from the onslaught' (Freedman, "Andy Warhol and the Plastic Quadrangle," n.p.).

64 During the first EPI performance at the Dam, Wilcock reported, "Somebody was watching the late news on a tiny, portable television set. 'Wow' said Andy. 'Wouldn't it be great if we could have one of those on every table?'" (Wilcock, "A 'High' School of Music and Art," p.5).

65 Renan, *An Introduction to the American Underground Film*, p.227.

67 *Ibid.*, p.53.

68 *Ibid.*, p.44.

69 See, most notably, Jonas Mekas. "Notes after Re-seeing the Movies of Andy Warhol," *Andy Warhol: Film Factory*, pp. 37-39; and P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde* (1974), 3rd ed. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 348-352.

70 Jonas Mekas, "On the Plastic Inevitables," p.243.

71 Rosalind Krauss, p.31. Filmmaker Hollis Frampton similarly speaks of the "metaphoric simultaneity" of video as realized in the "dissolve." Hollis Frampton, *Circles of Confusion*, Rochester, Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1983, p.167. As he comments further, "Photons impress upon the random delirium of silver halide crystals in the film emulsion an illusion of order; electrons warp the ordered video raster, determinate as a crystal lattice, into an illusion of delirium." (*Ibid.*, p.163).

72 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," Third Version" (1939), *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003, p.268 (emphasis in original).

73 It is in this way, as Benjamin explained in *The Arcades Project*, that the superstructure "expresses" the lived conditions of the masses. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1999, p.392. Such "dream images," as he called them – the arcades were one; film, in a different way, another – were ambiguously intertwined sites that manifest at the same time the immanent forces of utopian longing and those of ideological repression (pp. 4-5 and 388-404 [convolute K]).

74 See Benjamin's comments on the film's revelation of habitual actions in argument of this article that the transformations that Cray sees in television in the 1970's begin to be visible within the culture at this moment in the mid-1960's. On the transformation in television, see Jonathan Cray, "Eclipse of the Spectacle." *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation*. ed. Brian Wallis, Boston, David R. Godine, 1984, pp. 283-294.

75 "Our bars and city streets, our offices and fur-

nished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories seemed to close relentlessly around us. Then came film and exploded this prison-world with the dynamism of the split second, so that now we can set off calmly on journeys of adventure among its far-flung debris." (Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," p.265). The earlier translation famously rendered the last part of the citation as "in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling." (Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn New York, Schocken Books, 1969, p.236). "Entirely new structural formations" is taken from the *Illuminations* translation; the revised translation renders the phrase as "entirely new structures of matter."

76 Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," p.265 (emphasis added). This dynamic formed the contemporary dialectical counterpart to the outmoded dream images of the nineteenth century arcades, which, in the midst of a commercial space, reveal (as their unconscious) the immense field of constructive possibilities of iron and steel building technologies.

77 In Ronald Taylor, ed., *Aesthetics and Politics*, London, Verso, 1980, p. 123. See Giorgia Agamben's discussion of parts of this correspondence, in "The Prince and the Frog," - *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience*. trans. Liz Heron, London, Verso, 1993, pp. 107-124.

78 Taylor, *Aesthetics and Politics*, p.140.

79 I am thinking here of Benjamin's famous idea of ambiguity as "the manifest imaging of dialectic, the law of dialectics at a standstill" (Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 10). In early film this law was to be found in the coexistence of a certain level of critique or negation, brought on by the shock effect produced by cinematic technology, and a consumability - as something stirring, useful, ultimately heartening" - by which this effect was "brought closer" to the masses who did not thereby reject it as they would more distant forms of high art. See Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p.395, and Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," p.264. It was the very volatility of this moment of combined reception that Benjamin saw as a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for the audiences' awakening to their lived situation and that called for a political channeling in one direction or another.

80 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time - Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p.266 (ellipses in original). The context of Deleuze's remark is both a commentary on Benjamin and a meditation on the possibilities of a resistant art in the age of television.

81 And others, such as spiritualism or an idea of the EPI's merely illustrating an LSD trip. For their part, the members of the EPI consistently rejected both interpretations. See comments in Barrie Hale, "The Warhol Happening," *The Telegram* (Toronto), November 14, 1966, p.44; and Judy Altman, "Warhol 'Happening': Its Like a Noisy Bomb," *Philadelphia Daily News*, December 12, 1966, p.4.

82 Benjamin comments on this "threshold" *The Arcades Project*, p. 898.

83 Larry McCombs, "Chicago Happenings," Boston Broadside, July 1966, in Scrapbook Vol.2 Small, p.7. Warhol Archives.

84 On the relationship of capitalist dislocations to the emergence of liberationist struggles, see Ernesto Laclau

and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London, Verso, 1985, esp. 160 - 161; and Ernesto Laclau, "New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time," *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. London, Verso, 1990, pp. 3-85.

85 Thus, although it intersects with it, the EPI is not fully assimilable to the critique of late capitalist culture developed by Fredric Jameson. Nor is it adequately characterized from a cultural studies approach like that of Dick Hebdige, which seeks a subversiveness within the displacement of existing codes via certain rituals of consumption. See Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London, Routledge, 1979, esp. 102ff. Warhol's work with the EPI is ultimately more productive (not least through its augmentation of technological dislocations) than either of these models would seem to allow. On issues of sub-cultural resistance in relation to modern art, see Thomas Crow's indispensable "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," *Modern Art in the Common Culture*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996, pp. 3-37. Crow's article, more Adornian in nature and thus distinct from the argument about sub-cultural resistance developed here, - references at the beginning the "Happenings" of Warhol among others.

86 Kathy Acker's quote is found in "Blue Valentine," *Andy Warhol: Film Factory*, p. 65. See also Peter Wollen's comments at the end of "Raiding the Icebox," *Andy Warhol: Film Factory*, pp.25-26. Jon Savage has also noted the role played by the image of the Velvet Underground and Warhol's Factory for the development of British punk in "The New Hippies," *The Book with No Name*, ed. Ian Birch, London, Omnibus, 1981, p.40, cited in Simon Frith and Howard Home, *Art into Pop*. London, Methuen and Co., 1987, p.131.

87 Jonathan Cray points to the relation of the suburban "non-sites" investigated by Smithson and "what might be called the "tele-visual" city" of the new electronic media in "J.G. Ballard and the Promiscuity of Forms," *Zone 1/2* (1986), pp. 159-165. Works such as Mel Bochner's *Alfavielle*, *Godard's Apocalypse* (1968; which critiques Godard's humanism on the basis of Warhol, Burroughes, and Roger Corman) and, later, Dan Graham's *Rock My Religion* (1982-84; which allegorizes this moment of passage from art to popular music) take up issues raised by the EPI and, I would contend, form part of its extended artistic reception.

88 "And all this time you probably thought the Velvet Underground was talking about drugs, homosexuality, and sadomasochism. Look a bit closer" (McGuire, "The Boston Sound," p. 45).

I would like to thank John Smith and Matthew Wrbican at the Andy Warhol Museum, Robert Hailer and Jonas Mekas at Anthology Film Archives, Callie Angell of The Andy Warhol Film Project and Jay Roeg for allowing me access to important and hard-to locate sources and documents.

EXHIBITION FORMATS

The Exploding Plastic Inevitable is available in a variety of exhibition formats:

1) MULTI-SCREEN VIDEO INSTALLATION

ENVIRONMENT – the recreation of the “EPI”

This re-creation of the “EPI” experience is as a multi-media multi-screen spatial environment. This allows each visitor to participate in creating their own experience of the event. As people enter the space, they are surrounded on all sides by the image projections of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable and the Velvet Underground’s music.

The exhibition is extremely simple to setup and operate. Only four video projectors and four DVD players are required. The presentation operates automatically with little or no maintenance. The set-up is simple and can be completed in a few days. Costs for set-up and shipping are minimal.

A room with four walls can be used, or four screens can be placed in a larger room. Directional flow can be created by having to entrances and two exits. If desired, the ceiling can be composed of black shiny vinyl plastic for a more dramatic effect, as well as the floor.

2) INTRODUCTION TO THE “EPI” EXHIBITION

To understand the context of “EPI” within art, four additional information screens are available and can be placed prior to entering the exhibition. These provide extensive information about:

- **Andy Warhol** – The artist
- **Nico** - the VU’s “Femme Fatale” singer and actress
- **The Velvet Underground** - the music group now acknowledged to have been 25 years ahead of their time.
- **Andy Warhol and his friends**

3) PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

A photography exhibition is also available and is comprised of a maximum of 125 images in various thematic arrangements. These are available in various size prints, as printed wall banners and also as a DVD for projection.

4) SINGLE SCREEN VIDEO FILM OF “EPI”

The Exploding Plastic Inevitable is also available for large screen video projection in single-screen format.

DOCUMENTARY FILM SCREENINGS

Documentary films related to the exhibitions, are also available for public screenings:

- Documentary of **Andy Warhol**, the artist 59 minutes
- Documentary of **Andy Warhol**, the person.
- Documentary of **Nico**, “Femme Fatale” singer in the Velvet Underground, and actress in Warhol’s films, 71 minutes

- Documentary on **The Velvet Underground**, the shows music group, 45 minutes

POSTER AND CATALOG INFORMATION

A poster and catalog design are available as digital files for the exhibitions. Translated versions can be made available in all languages.

REFERENCES

“My Mind Split Open – Andy Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable” An extensive critical review by Art Historian Brandon W. Joseph, University of California at Davis. (Note: Brandon W. Joseph is available for lectures and presentations of the “EPI”)

FILM REVIEWS

“*Ronald Nameth – Exploding Plastic Inevitable*” Gene Youngblood, Expanded Cinema, E.P. Dutton Co
“*Nameth/Warhol replace arc with strobe*”, Richard Whitehall, Los Angeles Free Press.

PARTIAL LISTING OF INSTITUTIONAL SCREENINGS

- INDIANA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA, USA
- CENTRE POMPIDOU: MUSÉE D’ART MODERNE, PARIS, FRANCE
- LA CASA ENCENDIDA, MADRID, SPAIN
- MUSEU D’ART CONTEMPORANI DE BARCELONA (MACBA), BARCELONA, SPAIN
- WALTER ART CENTER, MILWAUKEE, WI, USA
- MUMOK, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, VIENNA AUSTRIA
- BBC TV, UK
- ZDF TV, GERMANY
- DR TV– DANISH NATIONAL TV, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK
- LA SEPT ARTE – EUROPEAN CULTURAL NETWORK FOR TV
- CHANNEL 4, LONDON UK
- HARVARD FILM ARCHIVE, CAMBRIDGE, MA
- AMERICAN MUSEUM MOVING IMAGE, ASTORIA, NY
- MUSÉE D’ART MODERNE, PARIS, FRANCE,
- THE CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER, CHICAGO, IL, USA
- KUNSTGRIFF, ZURICH, SWITZERLAND,
- TATE MODERN, LONDON UK
- ICA, INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LONDON, UK
- VIENNA KUNSTHALLE, VIENNA, AUSTRIA
- WHITNEY MUSEUM, NEW YORK, NY,
- ARTE – TVE TELEVISION ESPANOLA, MADRID, SPAIN,
- LILJEVALCHS KUNSTHALL, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
- SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE, CA
- HIRSHHORN MUSEUM, WASHINGTON, DC
- GESELLSCHAFT FUR AKTUELLE KUNST, BREMEN, GERMANY

INSTITUTIONAL ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS

- INDIANA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA, USA
- MUSEU D’ART CONTEMPORANI DE BARCELONA (MACBA), BARCELONA, SPAIN
- WALKER ART CENTER, MILWAUKEE, WI, USA
- MUMOK, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, VIENNA, AUSTRIA
- HENIE ONSTAD KUNSTSENTER, OSLO, NORWAY
- ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM, PITTSBURGH, PA – PREVIEW

THE MULTIPLE SCREEN VIDEO INSTALLATION EXHIBITION of ANDY WARHOL'S *EXPLODING PLASTIC INEVITABLE*

Andy Warhol's environmental happening combined not only screenings of his films, but also dance theater, light shows, together with the music of the Velvet Underground. To re-create the experience of Warhol's *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* as a multimedia environment, a multiple screen video installation is utilized.

The content of this multimedia environment is based on the only existing imagery from the original event.

The exhibition is extremely simple to setup and operate.
Only four video projectors and four DVD players are required.
The set-up can be made in a few days and costs for set-up and shipping are minimal.

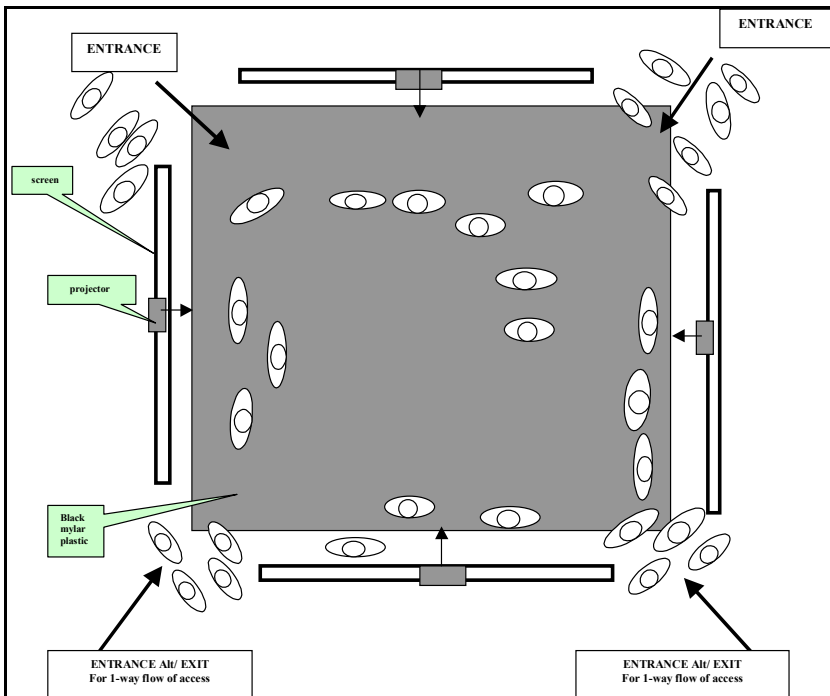
A room with four walls can be used, or four screens can be placed in a larger room.
Directional flow can be created by having to entrances and two exits.
If desired, the ceiling can be composed of black shiny vinyl plastic, as well as the floor.

People can walk around the space freely to experience the imagery and create their own "composition".
Participants are surrounded on all sides by the projections of the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*.

The presentation operates automatically with little or no maintenance.
The maximum presentation time is 22 minutes. (Shorter times can be provided.)
After the presentation ends, 2 minutes are programmed for participants to enter/exit.

TECHNICAL (may be sponsored by equipment manufacturers)

4 - DVD players , 4 - video projectors, 4 – screens/walls, 4 speakers, Black vinyl plastic for floor & ceiling.



CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION PRESENTATIONS for *ANDY WARHOL'S EXPLODING PLASTIC INEVITABLE*

To provide the public with a understanding of the context in which Warhol created the Exploding Plastic Inevitable,

information will be made available in 5-minute presentations on four information screens.

Four large screens are available to the public before they enter the actual environment of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable. (Please see detailed illustration of the exhibition area).

Screen One presents an insight into Andy Warhol, the person, and influences on his life, with interviews of people who knew him, as well as the comments of various art critics.

Screen Two presents the life of singer Nico.

Screen Three presents the VELVET UNDERGROUND

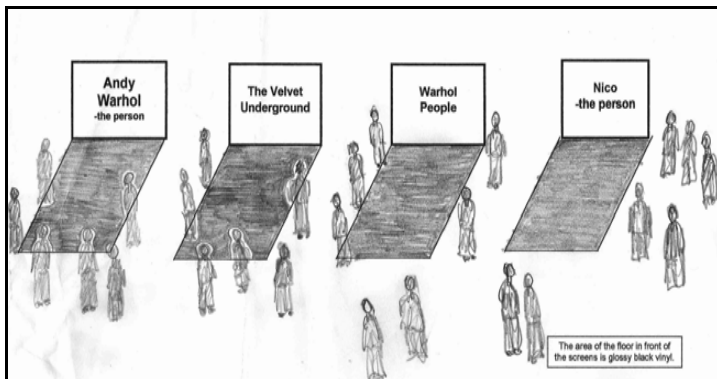
Screen Four presents an insight as to how Andy Warhol was experienced by contemporary artists of his time.

The information is presented automatically, and re-starts at the end of the presentation. Each presentation can be timed to be from 5 to 10 minutes in length.

This video-based information can be presented on TV monitors for smaller exhibition spaces, and with DVD projectors and screens for larger spaces.

These information screens can be placed in a space prior to entering the "EPI", either in a row or other formation, as is deemed appropriate.

TECHNICAL (may be sponsored by equipment manufacturers)
4 - DVD players, 4 - video projectors or TV monitors, 4 - screens/walls,
Black vinyl plastic for floor in front of the screens



The single screen video and the exhibitions represent the experience of Andy Warhol's multimedia environment containing his films *Vinyl*, together with music of the *Velvet Underground*, with Lou Reed, Sterling Morrison, John Cale and Mo Tucker and also the performers Gerard Malanga, Ingrid Superstar, Edward Pile and Susan Walsh.

The video installation utilizes the only comprehensive material of the original event, and re-creates this environment by projecting four separate sources of imagery onto a four-sided space. DVD technology is utilized to present this imagery and sound.

Single screen video format

A single screen version for public presentation is available for museum or library presentation in the VHS, standard DVD and high definition DVD formats.

Multiple screen Video Installation Exhibition Format

All materials are provided in the DVD and high definition DVD formats. These provide for the least wear of the materials, and allow the exhibition to operate automatically. In addition, the DVD materials provide maintenance-free operation.

Previews

"Previews" are provided only for curators, broadcast programmers, educators, libraries and critics in VHS cassette or DVD disc formats. The charge is \$12.50 for preview cassettes/discs plus shipping charges. Preview charges must be prepaid before shipping and preview tapes must be returned within 5 days of receipt unless otherwise noted. If you decide to acquire the program before returning it, the full preview cost is applicable to the acquisition license fee.

Receiving the Preview

Previews will be sent out to be received a minimum of four days before the required date. If you have NOT received tapes on this date, please call us immediately so we have enough time to trace and/or replace the shipment. If you have received damaged tapes, you must notify us immediately.

Custom Programs

Services are available to edit the material and create special programs for your exhibition requirements. Foreign language versions can be provided. If you wish to shorten the presentation time or to specify a pre-determined time for the entrance/exit of the public into the space, please contact us with your special needs and requests, and email a description of your programming needs.

Translations

Translation rights are available for a service fee.

Acquisition of the exhibition

For museum, library or other long-term collection for acquisition, an acquisition license is required. You are required to sign and return the Agreement prior to our shipment of the tapes. Please note that the acquisition license is a license for the "life of the tape/disc". Licensed tapes/discs are not replaced unless they were received damaged.

Liability and Copyright

The Acquisition License includes public performance rights for screenings within museums, galleries, libraries, community-based centers, or educational institutions. Tapes may not be used at fund-raising events or at auctions without our written permission. Please note that you will be held responsible for the full replacement cost of the tape or disc if it is damaged while in the your possession, during return shipment or if the tapes are not returned at all.

International copyright law protects all tapes/discs. No tapes may be duplicated in whole or in part. The Institution Acquisition License or preview does not include the rights to alter the tape, offer it for sub-distribution, lend it to others, broadcast or transmit it by any other electronic means.

Promotional and Merchandising Materials

• Photographs

Digital files of photographs are available for promotional purposes. Photographs as digital files are emailed for \$5.00 per photo. The credit line must read, "Courtesy of RONALD NAMEETH FILMS," in all publications.

• **Exhibition Poster:** Available as printable pdf files in various dimensions according to your needs with your information in the design. All language versions can be designed, if you provide the translated text.

• **Exhibition Catalogue:** Available as printable pdf files in various dimensions according to your needs with your information in the design. All language versions can be designed, if you provide the translated text.

• TV broadcast promotional material

A short promotional video (Beta SP) is available for TV broadcast in news and cultural reportage. Additional language versions are available, if you provide the translated text.

• Home Video Sales

A special edit of "EPI" as a VHS and DVD is available for sales in Institutional and museum shops and boutiques for Institutions with an Acquisition License. These tapes and discs are available at a special discount to the institution shops for sales to individuals (Home Use Only).

HOW TO ORDER:

To place an order for a preview or acquisition, please email the information requested in the order request form. The Institution Acquisition License Agreement outlines the terms and conditions of the exhibition licensee. You are required to sign and return the Acquisition License Agreement prior to our shipment of the exhibition disks. Please note that the acquisition license means license of "life of the tape/disc". Licensed tapes/discs are not replaced unless they were received damaged. A completed written order form is necessary for a valid order. Any changes to the order must be submitted again in writing using the information in the order form.

Institutional Fees	V H S	DVD	HD/Blulite DVD
RENTAL - Single screen video	\$100	\$125	Please inquire
ACQUISITION - Single screen video	\$1200	\$1550	Please inquire
RENTAL – 4 screen exhibition Fee based on length of exhibition	-	Please inquire	Please inquire
RENTAL –Context Information Presentations (4 screen presentation)		Please inquire	Please inquire
ACQUISITION – 4 screen exhibition (4 screen presentation)	-	\$6170	Please inquire
ACQUISITION – Context Information Presentations (4 screen presentation)		\$2400	Please inquire
RENTAL– Photography exhibition (Maximum 125 photos available) Also as DVD/HD DVD Please inquire	-	Please inquire	Please inquire
ACQUISITION – Photography exhibition (Maximum 125 photos available) Also as DVD/HD DVD Please inquire	-	Please inquire	Please inquire

Fees are subject to change. Please request a quote before sending an order.

Your written order must include:

- Contact information: (correct shipping, billing, and e-mail address as well as phone and fax number)
- Shipping account number if you don't want to be billed for shipping (UPS, Fed-Ex, DHL, Airborne, etc.)
- Acquisition License Agreement must be signed and included with your order.

International Orders

All orders must be pre-paid, either by bank check or by wire transfers. For wire transfers, shipment is made after receiving confirmation from the bank that the transfer of the payment has been received. Confirming the transfer of international funds can take up to 4 weeks, so you should place your order six to eight weeks in advance of your need for the exhibition to guarantee that we have ample time to ship the order before the required date. To confirm transfer, please email a copy of the bank wire. All international orders carry an administrative fee of \$25.

Payment : Arrange for transfer of the fee to:

Community Trust Bank
Bank Routing Number: 042102694
Bank Account Number: 4001655242
Payable to: Ronald Nameth Films

SHIPPING, RECEIVING, AND RETURNING TAPES

- Non-express shipping via Airmail: \$12.50 per tape
- Rush fee for less than 2 weeks delivery: \$20 added to shipping charges.
- Rush fee for less than 1-week delivery: \$30 added to

Shipping rates are determined by weight and the shipping service used. Packages being shipped are priced according to Federal Express' or DHL's current rates. International shipping arrangements will be determined upon confirmation of your order.

You are responsible for all additional shipping costs, such as airfreight and customs charges for international orders, and rush-shipping charges for late orders.

Receiving Tapes/Disks

Tapes/Disks will be sent out to be received a minimum of four days before the date you require them. If you have NOT received tapes on this schedule, please email us immediately so we have enough time to trace and/or replace the shipment.

Tape compatibility

It is extremely important that you test the tape in your equipment by rewinding the tapes before playback. This procedure increases the compatibility between the tape and the deck for higher playback quality. If you have received damaged tapes, please notify us immediately.

Return of Previews

Previews must be returned within one week and if not returned promptly, the customer will be charged the standard rental fee.

Tapes can be returned via first class airmail or via UPS or a courier service such as Federal Express, DHF or Airborne. Client is responsible for all fees incurred in returning tapes/disks.

Please Take Note!

Tapes or discs should NEVER be shipped in fiber filled bags or envelopes. Any tape returned in a fiber bag will have to be destroyed and the user will be charged \$25 in damages. Plastic "bubble" envelopes are the preferred shipping form.

**SINGLE SCREEN RENTAL & ACQUISITION REQUEST FORM
FOR SINGLE SCREEN VIDEO OR DVD**

Please copy the information in this form and send in an email
to: info@explodingplasticinevitable.com

Your name:

Institution:

Phone:

Fax:

e-mail:

BILL TO ADDRESS:

Name:

Institution:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip

SHIP TO ADDRESS

(Not required if same as billing address)

Name:

Institution:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip

Choose Type and Format:

FORMAT: VHS DVD OTHER

TYPE: PREVIEW ACQUISITION

DATE NEEDED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Shipping Method/ Special Instructions:

INQUIRY FOR THE EXHIBITION

Please copy the information in this form and send in an email
to: info@explodingplasticinevitable.com

Your name:

Institution:

Date:(mm.dd.yy):

Phone:

Fax:

e-mail:

INQUIRY FOR EXHIBITION

– please mark the items of interest

MULTI-SCREEN VIDEO ENVIRONMENT EXHIBITION – RENTAL - Fee based on length of exhibition

MULTI-SCREEN VIDEO ENVIRONMENT EXHIBITION – ACQUISITION

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION – RENTAL - Fee based on length of exhibition and number of photographs utilized
– (Up to125 photos available) Also available for projection in the DVD/HD/Blulite DVD format

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION – ACQUISITION
– (Up to125 photos available) Also available for projection in the DVD/HD/Blulite DVD format

Special Requirements Translation/Language:

EXHIBITION PROMOTIONAL & SALES MATERIALS

– please mark the items of interest if you wish to receive additional information.

Press Photographs (as digital files (jpeg) Specify number of photographs required:

Exhibition Poster (as digital files (pdf files)
License Fee required, Specify Language: Specify size required:

Exhibition Catalog- layout, text & photos (digital files.pdf)
License Fee required, Specify Language: Specify size required:

TV broadcast promotional material
A short promotional video (Beta SP) is available for TV broadcast in news and cultural reportage.
Rental Fee required. Specify Language:

Home Video Sales
For sales in Institutional and museum shops and boutiques to individuals (for Home use only).
Discount ex VAT to institution bookstores/shops. Available in quantities of 10. Format: VHS & DVD

T-shirts with various images of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable
For sales in Institutional and museum shops and boutiques to individuals. Discount ex VAT available.
Available in quantities of 10

Book – “Andy Warhol’s Exploding Plastic Inevitable” Comprehensive overview and review of EPI.
Provides background, reportage. Discount ex VAT to institution bookstores/shops.

Post Cards
with various images of the EPI. Discount ex VAT to institution bookstores/shops.
Available in quantities of 100



Andy Warhol's
multi-screen/mixed-media environment
**THE EXPLODING
PLASTIC INEVITABLE**
info@explodingplasticinevitable.com