

OPINION

VIDEO NICE . . .

"But is it art?" The daily press always seems to ask this of video, on the assumption that art has either to be flat as in painting or 3D as in sculpture. It is a definition which ignores some 100 years of development, not only in art, but in society at large – and the technological advances we take for granted.

The ability to make use of existing technology in multimedia installations, such as video, opens up endless creative avenues for the artist that, when done well, allow the viewer a dynamic and interactive role with the artwork, moving through, with and beyond their imagination, assisted in every step by their artistic 'guide', whose vision they are witnessing.

In a short piece I can't mention all the artists I admire, but to assist in my celebratory opinion of the form I'll highlight a few. Women artists feature prominently, above all Sam Taylor-Wood and Candice Breitz, both of whom reveal strong cinematic influences in their work. These are everywhere in video art, as is to be expected in a culture bombarded by TV, film and internet images. For example in Willie Doherty's video featuring a bridge in Ireland, with the artist running but getting nowhere (largely a political commentary on the situation in Northern Ireland) I can't help thinking of the *The Fugitive* with its same unrelenting running man going nowhere.

As the technology advances so also does the presentation of video work, now a very exciting part of the process. As well as standard monitor or wall projection you can now view through a hole in the wall or on the floor (as in *Citizens* by Christina Benz, where viewers kneel on the floor and peer through a hole to view a city full of citizen rodents) or a screen placed at the end of a steel pipe. Artists are pushing the boundaries to create their artistic visions. We, the viewers, can sit back, celebrate and watch!

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