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TWO WORKS

ARCHE NOAH

Arche Noah (Noah's Ark) (plates 2, 3, 4; fig. 3) consists of a wooden vessel, about 3.5 meters long and 1.5 meters wide, constructed according to the principles of boatbuilding. The hull is made of overlapping slats of wood that were initially stained dark brown and later decorated with painted symbols of a ship. The vessel rests on a base decorated with large-scale black-and-white panoramic photographs of Mount Ararat, where Noah's ark is believed to have landed once the floodwaters receded. These photographs, visible to early spectators, were later partly hidden when plants were added to the work. Because the stern of the vessel is open and unfinished, the installation is considered, not a freestanding sculpture, but rather a construction that must be affixed to the gallery wall.

Colorfully painted papier-mâché figures (two flamingos, two iguanas, a dog, a giraffe, a pig, and a snake) are integral to the installation. The deck was originally decorated with a colored banner, seen only in the earliest photograph of the installation and never reinstalled. Twenty-nine Panasonic CRT monitors are arranged in a double layer on the deck of the boat, and a single layer skirts its base, with a varying number of monitors visible in photographs of the installation. The monitors around the base face upward; they, too, were partly obscured when plants were added to the work. The three-channel video was originally operated by laser disc, like many of Paik's artworks at the time; having migrated to the latest technology, however, the video playback now runs from three flash media players. The video is repeated at regular intervals. As in almost all Paik's installations, the

video consists of a playful assemblage of random fragments of moving images whose varying graphic forms and compositional artfulness exert a visual pull on spectators. The installation has no auditory element.

Paik, when he created *Arche Noah*, was interested in the interaction between technology, nature, and humans. In 1976 he said, “Video art imitates nature, not in its appearance or mass, but in its intimate ‘time-structure.’”¹ *Arche Noah* relates to archaic and biblical themes and the four elements (fire, water, earth, and air)—interests the artist also pursued in *Passage* (1986) and the *Planets* series (1980s–90s).² The installation can also be seen, from another perspective, as emphasizing the role of technology in saving humanity from the Flood. In his characteristic mix of languages, Paik explains: “Why now Arche Noah? . . . Treibhauseffekt [the greenhouse effect] is clear and [it] will force us to think about the first Sintflut [flood].”³ Peter Weibel, the chairman of the ZKM, noted that Noah’s Ark depicts “the first storage of information, the first human hard drive—a kind of first-ever database.”⁴ The idea of salvation inscribed in the biblical story of Noah’s Ark gains another, reciprocal meaning: technology-based media, owing to their progressive obsolescence and the enormous difficulty of preserving them, are liable to vanish rapidly.

After the ZKM acquired *Arche Noah*, it exhibited the work only twice—each time in a different form in a different venue; otherwise the work lay in museum storage for about sixteen years. Only recently has it been rediscovered and reinstalled in a form that varies slightly from its previous three incarnations. *Arche Noah*, a poorly documented piece that a few decades ago might have been considered uncollectible, is now one of the many examples of changeable contemporary artworks that can be encountered in museum galleries. Documentation of the installation was scarce until 2009, and only a few records of *Arche Noah*’s exhibition exist in the museum’s archives. That absence can be explained by the ZKM’s lack of either a conservation department or an established archival structure during its early years of existence. (Founded in 1989, the museum was established in its current location in 1997.) More broadly, the infrastructure for technology-based media installations in both European and American institutional collections was inadequate, and documentation of such works was meager.⁵

Paik’s assistant and fabricator in Germany, Jochen Saueracker, assembled *Arche Noah* for the 1989 opening of Hamburg’s Weisses Haus, the first exhibition space in Germany designed for video, sound, and light installations (plate 2).⁶ Photographs of this venue and accounts by Saueracker, the gallery owner Thomas Wegner, and Wulf Herzogenrath (Paik’s curator in Bremen and Cologne and the man who suggested to Wegner that he exhibit Paik) reveal how *Arche Noah* began its unsettled life.

The Weisses Haus photographs of *Arche Noah* reveal a boat stained dark brown and an arrangement of TV sets that has remained almost unchanged to this day.⁷ The upper monitors played a two-channel video of short cuts of images related to ancient and modern civilizations.⁸ In this initial installation, however, the video showed—in a closed-circuit mode—the Alster river that flows beside the Weisses Haus.⁹ In the gallery, viewers perceived the ark as drifting on the water, televised on the lower monitors, on which,

occasionally, accidental canoeists appeared. This site-specific character, for which Wegner takes credit—it would have been omitted in subsequent reinstallations—reflected *Arche Noah's* relationship with its immediate surroundings as well as with Hamburg as a harbor.¹⁰ Colorful papier-mâché animals and brightly colored banners lent the installation a vivid, joyful character. According to Herzogenrath, the ordinary, almost naive character of these figures embodies Paik's habit of providing elements that contrast with the seriousness of "hard" technology. That a local art teacher, Christoph Grau, with his fourteen-year-old pupils created the animals in improvised after-hours art workshops helps explain why some of the creatures lack mates.¹¹

Heinrich Klotz, the founding director of the ZKM, acquired the installation for the museum shortly after its debut at the Weisses Haus. In 1991 it was presented in *Multi-Mediale 2* at the Opel Factory in Karlsruhe (plate 3).¹² Images from this venue show *Arche Noah* in a confined gallery space and reveal a number of changes. The banners seemed to have vanished, and it is unclear whether the video showing the river has been retained (in the form of a recording). The animals have been repositioned slightly: the pair of flamingos stand at the rear of the vessel, the snakes to the right, and the pig to the left. Under magnification the photos reveal another change: paintings and inscriptions in green, red, yellow, and white paint (most probably acrylic)¹³ on the hull of *Arche Noah* and numerous paint drippings on the TV sets and on the floor around the ark. The paintings depict small-scale pictograms of ships and fish, the artist's signature, and the title of the work, with some corrections. The inscriptions are in Chinese and Korean: 白南準 (Paik, Nam June); 노아 (Noah); 方舟 (squared ship); and 함 (battleship).¹⁴ Given this documentation, it is likely that the painted additions originated in Karlsruhe and that the actual painting took place on location just before—or even during—the exhibition of the work; they may be the only record of the artist's direct involvement in the installation.¹⁵

According to the ZKM's records, the installation was loaned to the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona in June 1992 as part of the show *Electronic Art* (July 1–September 2, 1992). But no documentation of it at that venue exists. Saueracker recalled that at this stage Paik had decided to rethink the spatial setting of *Arche Noah*. And as a result, he modified the relation of the artwork to the exhibition space, adding a large number of local plants around the base of the work.¹⁶

THE AFTERLIFE OF ARCHE NOAH

In October 2006, when I joined the conservation department of the ZKM, I became involved in moving the museum's off-site storage to a new location. This project gave me insight into the conservation of some pivotal works from the early history of multimedia art.

That was when I first encountered *Arche Noah*, assessing, documenting, and recording its elements for the conservation file. The work was in poor condition—or rather its elements were. Having no instructions or documentation at hand, I found it impossible to determine whether the underlying structure of the work and the painted slats of the

hull constituted the complete work. The playback equipment was stored in another facility, and I later learned that it was occasionally used in other installations. Members of the conservation department were groping in the dark as they tried to determine what actually constituted *Arche Noah* and how each constituent part contributed to the whole. After a thorough inventory, the conservators cleaned the elements of *Arche Noah* and repaired tears and cracks that endangered the stability of the work. Frames were built to support some of the fragile animals, making it possible to relocate them without risking damage. At that time, neither reinstallation of the work nor further research on it was feasible; it was to remain in the new storage facility until resources allowed its reinstallation in the ZKM. Consequently, in 2006 the artwork remained disassembled and deactivated.

The reinstallation of *Arche Noah* took place two years later, in 2008—nearly sixteen years after its preceding presentation and two years after the relocation of the ZKM storage facility. With the prospect of an upcoming exhibition on the premises of Energie Baden-Württemberg (EnBW), Karlsruhe, the ZKM technical and conservation team set up a test installation to complete the inventory and to facilitate the conservators' documentation of the work in its finished form. In my role as conservator in charge, supported by my departmental colleagues, I completed the documentation of the installation and monitored its assembly, consulting Saueracker on the reconstruction of the work. The conservators made sketches and photographs, and the technical team inspected the electronic equipment. Owing to the fragility of the original laser disc player and reflecting the ZKM's preservation policy, we digitized the video data, storing it on and playing it from a flash media player. The lower monitors played a video that differed from the closed-circuit images of the Alster River shown at *Arche Noah's* initial installation in Hamburg; this new compilation of video images must have been created during the course of the Barcelona installation in 1992. Photographs taken during the 2008 test installation and later published in the EnBW exhibition catalogue reveal that neither the animals nor the plants were included in the installation (fig. 3).¹⁷

On the occasion of the EnBW exhibition *Nam June Paik: Werke aus der Sammlung des ZKM* (Nam June Paik: Artworks from the ZKM Collection; October 23, 2008–January 18, 2009), *Arche Noah* was displayed for the first time since 1992 (plate 4). Because it had been impossible to perform conservation work on the papier-mâché animals before the show, in accordance with a curatorial decision, they were missing from this installation. The team handling the artworks, in consultation with Saueracker, arranged more than forty white flowerpots containing different plants. Lacking any account of how to arrange them, conservators re-created an earlier arrangement, from Paik's installation *TV Garden* (1974); indeed, I had the impression as I observed the video images flashing between the green plants of this installation of *Arche Noah*, that I was seeing a fragment of *TV Garden's* electronic jungle.

At this time the team realized that *Arche Noah* could not be kept in its original form. It was too large and fragile to move back to the ZKM for display, let alone to lend to other institutions. Our aim in rebuilding the structure was to prevent the irreversible damage



FIGURE 3
Nam June Paik, *Arche Noah* (1989). View during the test re-installation at the ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, in 2008. Photograph by Steffen Harms © EnBW AG, Germany, and Steffen Harms © 2016 Nam June Paik Estate.

that would inevitably result from arranging the slats of the vessel anew each time it was reinstalled. Saueracker, in cooperation with the ZKM's conservation and technical staff, made the necessary modifications in June 2009 (fig.4 and plate 5). The interior frame of *Arche Noah* was replaced with one designed to allow the vessel to be dismantled and moved without disassembling the planking. The reconfigured work consisted of a vessel that breaks down into two self-contained transportable elements and a base. The disassembled structure of the original was held in storage as a record of the work's initial construction.

Meanwhile, a specialist in paper conservation restored the four large-scale photographs of Mount Ararat that wrap around the base of *Arche Noah*. These had been torn and had suffered other damage. Because the restored photos, being near the plants, would continue to be exposed to humidity and organic dyes, the conservation team also considered longer-term preservation solutions. In discussing these, we contemplated storing the original photographs and displaying replicas (a plan that was executed some years later). In June 2009 *Arche Noah* was returned to the ZKM storage facility, awaiting its next incarnation in a familiar but also somewhat new form.

Given *Arche Noah's* various past manifestations, it occurs to me that—aside from the painted vessel—all elements can be either replaced, replicated, migrated, or emulated.



FIGURE 4

Modification of the interior structure of Nam June Paik's *Arche Noah* (1989). The ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe. Photograph by Hanna Hölling.

Certainly the animals would have remained stable sculptural elements if they were adequately conserved. *Arche Noah* thus exists in a form somewhere between a conceptual and a physical entity, one dictated by conservation policies, the ephemeral status of its technological components, and the cyclical character of the plant ensemble.¹⁸

MUSEALIZATION

In light of the decisions to digitize the video data and modify the structure, what actually happened to *Arche Noah* in 2008–9 can be called its *musealization*. The word, coined by the Czech museologist Zbynek Stránský, names the process of transforming an object from its original context into a museological context.¹⁹ As it relates to *Arche Noah* and other works by Paik discussed in this book, *musealization* denotes an adaptation of a work of art to the demands and policies of the institution housing it; it is a domestication of sorts.²⁰ *Muzealization* recalls the term *afterlife*, in the sense used by the German philosopher, sociologist, and musicologist Theodor Adorno, who saw works that had entered the museum as works deprived of their original vitality.²¹ Whereas Adorno believed art was

ultimately revived in the museum context, the American philosopher John Dewey understood that relegating art to the museum separated it from the experiences of everyday life.²² The art historian Deborah Cherry, coming to the term *afterlife* from a different perspective, shifts its meaning to the “promise of survival, of living-on, through change.”²³

Arche Noah's afterlife began with its 2008–9 modification. Before that, like many other artifacts, it lay in the silence of a museum storage facility, awaiting rediscovery. That rediscovery, in 2008, however, led to the damage (which occurred with the repeated adjustment of the planks) that instigated the structural modification required if the museum were to satisfy its obligation to exhibit the work. As in many other cases of installation and multimedia art, *Arche Noah*'s afterlife brought with it modification, adaptation, and change.

Such changes to *Arche Noah*, however, also problematized the museum's role in safeguarding ephemeral and evolving artworks. Does withdrawing endangered artworks from display safeguard their legacy? Or would that legacy be better ensured by allowing the artworks' lives to continue? Do institutional custodians take a risk by trying to force dynamic artworks into static structures—creating a mausoleum rather than developing a new concept of the museum? Further, are conservators obliged to follow institutional and professional policies? What if such policies for these evolving works do not yet exist? I propose answers to these questions as I develop my argument.

Arche Noah is a successor to Paik's *TV Garden*, and in both works Paik ably balances the material and the conceptual, the technological and the organic. In *Arche Noah* Paik implemented, on the one hand, the idea of a loose sculptural arrangement of physical objects, and, on the other, an entirely ephemeral composition that includes fugitive materials—plants and TV sets—freed from any rigidly prescribed materialization.

TV GARDEN

TV Garden came into being in 1974 as *TV Sea* or, alternatively, *Garden*. Twenty monitors presented a rush of split and synthesized images from an earlier video, *Global Groove*, of 1973, by Paik and John J. Godfrey (fig. 5).²⁴ *TV Garden* was created for Paik's final show at the gallery owned by Fernanda Bonino, the artist's first dealer in the United States. In addition to prizing Paik as an artist, Bonino hoped to generate publicity for her newly opened uptown gallery space in New York.²⁵ Although his works did not sell, Bonino recalls, the gallery received the attention it needed by hosting lively and talented young artists like Paik and the German artist Mary Bauermeister (the partner of Karlheinz Stockhausen, whom Paik knew from Cologne) and Paik's downtown avant-garde friends: Allan Kaprow, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, and Allen Ginsberg. The art historian Edith Decker-Phillips says that the first version of *TV Garden* lacked plants because Paik could not afford to purchase them at the time.²⁶

TV Garden was shown again, in Syracuse and Philadelphia, among other cities, before its most significant presentation, at documenta 6 in Kassel, Germany, in 1977. It was



FIGURE 5

Peter Moore, Installation view at the exhibition *Nam June Paik: TV Sea: Electronic Art IV*, Gallery Bonino, New York, 1974. © Barbara Moore/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Paik's first large-scale installation, employing some thirty monitors lying face up on the floor in a dense ensemble of tropical plants (fig. 6).²⁷ Paik himself installed these first manifestations of *TV Garden*.

Herzogenrat maintains that the documenta 6 materialization of Paik's concept, unlike the reduced version shown by Bonino in 1974, fully embraced its spatial qualities.²⁸ A dark gallery space is ideal for viewers of *TV Garden*. Generic CRT monitors broadcast a pulsing rhythm of changing images from *Global Groove*. The soundtrack of *Global Groove*—music, acoustic effects, and voices—which Paik liked when it was played loud, is a dominant element of the work. The symbiosis of technology and nature on the track, however, sounds less than harmonic. The organic exuberance of plants seems sometimes to overwhelm the installation, to edge out the artificial shining of the screens. Now and again, however, the geometric, sculptural presence of cubical television sets—illuminated by their own electronic light—interrupts the entropic greenness. But if the viewer is struck at first by the plants that seem to dominate the space,²⁹ after a while the insistent pulse of successive electronic images, related both to the aesthetic, visual experience of the installation and to the experience of its *time*, suppresses that response.

Organic time *and* media time coexist in *TV Garden*, and viewers encounter them simultaneously. Plants follow the biological processes of growth and decay—the photo-



FIGURE 6
Nam June Paik, *Paik hinter Pflanzen mit TVs* (Paik behind the plants and TVs), undated, MD 169/o. Photograph © Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, gift of Joachim Diederichs, 2007 © 2016 Nam June Paik Estate.

synthetic life cycle—and have neither a certain date of expiration nor a guarantee of longevity. The video footage presents a mixture of both free-flowing and edited time—time compressed to a finite succession of recorded images, displayed with the accuracy of controlled sequencing and a scheduled point of death and rebirth, stop and start. The combination of organic natural time and the technological time of progress suggests that Paik’s garden is a naturalization of technology, a representation of an ideological “second nature.”³⁰ This technological and organic assemblage in Paik’s *TV Garden* seems to be heading toward an unexpected end, marked as much by the obsolescence of media as by the death of the plants and the pending moment when these elements will be replaced, in a cycle that repeats continually.

The core element of *TV Garden*—the video *Global Groove*—begins with the following announcement: “This is a glimpse of a video landscape of tomorrow, when you will be able to switch on any TV station on the earth and TV guides will be as fat as the Manhattan

telephone book.” Paik’s statement of 1973 was visionary, for in the video’s compositional principle and message, he anticipated the development of global channel surfing. The website Media Art Net describes *TV Garden* as follows: “The furiously edited ‘Global Groove’ video playing on the screens of the TV sets flickers and flashes through the mesh of green. Ambiguous like most of Paik’s works, this one leaves open the question of whether we are dealing with a symbiosis of nature and technology, or whether the new media are leading us back into the jungle with their disordered mass of rampant images.” In the light of the technological developments of the past fifty years, this video encapsulates a fascinating picture of the 1970s. In such a work, as the media theorist Wolfgang Ernst puts it, viewers are “dealing with the past as a form of delayed presence, preserved in a technological memory.”³¹ According to Herzogenrath, the key feature of *TV Garden*, an extraordinarily playful work, is the perspective from which the audience experiences it: they look down “from above,” standing on an elevated ramp, as at the Kunsthalle Bremen in 1999 (plate 6).³²

Unlike other installations transmitting moving images or light, *TV Garden*, when it is not playing, is on standby status. A single-channel video—any video by anyone—once unplugged, disappears, leaving only the body of its playback device; its continuity is disrupted. This also happens to Dan Flavin’s fluorescent bulbs, whose haunting beauty vanishes when they are unplugged, leaving only the static structure of plain mechanics; like the video content of *TV Garden*, Flavin’s work, unplugged, ceases to exist aesthetically. Flavin, well aware of the abrupt transition from vibrant art to lifeless apparatus, noted the “ironic humor of temporal monuments.”³³ The temporal monument of the unplugged *TV Garden*, however, insinuates its living status among the plants, resisting the extinction that comes with the interruption of the electric current. The persistence of the plants as living elements locates the work between the sculptural presence of its monitors—sunk in darkness—and the green of the plants, which discreetly disseminate their delicate scent through the room. Sound and light are shut off, but life continues.

Because of their changeability, installations often lack boundaries. *TV Garden*, since its exhibition at documenta 6 in 1977, has become a popular instance of electronic media mixed with plants—a playful symbiosis of techno-ecological garden—and has traveled to exhibitions around the globe. In the course of its numerous reinstallations, the number of monitors has increased to as many as 120 and the number of plants to 600. The version of *TV Garden* shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1982, curated by John Hanhardt, embedded twenty-eight TV sets in a nest of about a hundred plants, in an amorphous yet balanced composition (plate 7). At the Whitney, viewers observed the installation from an elevated L-shaped platform. A year later, in 1983, Laurent Busin curated a Belgian installation, following only a rough sketch by Paik. Busin, responding to the limited space of the gallery, designed a self-contained form resembling a ziggurat from which visitors could view the ensemble. Although *TV Garden* was originally conceived as a one-channel video installation, Paik authorized a second video

channel featuring his video *Oriental Paintings* (date unknown) when the work comprised over forty monitors.³⁴

Given the different versions that have appeared, one might ask how *TV Garden* became divorced from a single defined materialization. The answer can be traced back to 1996, when Paik—who was not on-site—instructed Brazilian curators to install *TV Garden*, *TV Fish* (1975), and *TV Buddha* (1974).³⁵ According to Stephen Vitiello, another of Paik's assistants—who tried to pin down how Paik wanted the *Garden* to be constructed—the artist encouraged the Brazilian curators to “get their own plants, their own fish, their own Brazilian Buddha.”³⁶ Despite instructions indicating that at least thirty TVs should be used, Paik urged Vitiello to use his own judgment about the number. As is evident here, the logic of reinstating an artwork on the basis of instructions resembles the process by which conceptual art is given physical form.³⁷

The museological life of *TV Garden* began in 2000, when it entered the collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The museum, before acquiring the work, exhibited it in *The Worlds of Nam June Paik*, from February 11 to April 26, 2000, in the rotunda (plate 8). Photographs of the exhibition reveal that in this setting *TV Garden* was not presented as it had been; the elevated ramp for viewers was no longer present.³⁸ Further, Paik allowed the addition of a second video channel to the Guggenheim exhibition, as he had done when the work was installed in Wellington in 1996.³⁹ The Guggenheim reinstallation of *TV Garden*, adapted to meet the constraints of the Frank Lloyd Wright building, sparked a debate about the extent to which the work could be modified and whether the physical characteristics of the Guggenheim legitimated such modifications. Did the active involvement of the artist sanction any and all modifications? What are the limits of the agency of intention?

From June 28, 2002, to January 12, 2003, a smaller display of *TV Garden* at the Guggenheim (plate 9) was presented in a more confined space in the museum. Although controversy had surrounded the work's installation in the open space of the rotunda, the later display apparently pleased neither viewers nor the staff of the museum; they generally expressed dissatisfaction with the presentation of the work. To many, the space allotted it seemed too small and the work seemed stuck there.⁴⁰

In 2002 *TV Garden* entered the collection of K21 Ständehaus, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, in Düsseldorf, Paik's adoptive home. The comprehensive documentation that the collection's conservation department produced in the years that followed records the monitors, plants, and maintenance procedures the work required.⁴¹ This version of *TV Garden*, created by Saueracker and approved by Paik, was permanently installed in a dark rectangular room, where it could be viewed only from a platform placed at the front. Because of the enormous difficulty of maintaining the living plants in a permanent display, the traditional plants and pots were replaced by hydroponic plants and a plant-care company was hired to maintain them.

On the occasion of Paik's retrospective at Tate Liverpool (December 17, 2010–March 13, 2011), *TV Garden* was shown for the first time in Great Britain (fig. 7).⁴² Although the



FIGURE 7

Nam June Paik, *TV Garden* (1974). Installation view at the Tate Liverpool exhibition *Nam June Paik: Video Artist, Performance Artist, Composer and Visionary*, December 17, 2010–March 13, 2011. Photograph © 2015 Tate, London © 2016 Nam June Paik Estate.

installation was officially “borrowed” from K21 Ständehaus in Düsseldorf, the shipment from Germany consisted of only an instruction sheet and a digital carrier of the video *Global Groove*. Jon Huffman, the curator and technician of the Paik estate, supervised the installation, which used newly acquired elements from local suppliers.⁴³ But even more curious, after the exhibition ended, the playback and display equipment the Tate had acquired from a local supplier was shipped to the Nam June Paik estate in the United States and stored there for future reinstallations.

In 2008, following the acquisition of the work by the Guggenheim and the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf, the Nam June Paik Art Center in Yongin, a city in the larger region surrounding Seoul, South Korea, installed its own permanent version of *TV Garden*. The former artistic director of the center, Young Cheol Lee, created this installation, in cooperation with the landscape architect Sang Su Ahn and (in an advisory role) the Japanese video artist Keigo Yamamoto, on the occasion of the festival *Now Jump*, celebrating the opening of the center in October 2008.⁴⁴ Here the TVs and plants are arranged in an enclosed gallery that admits natural light to enter through its window shades. The plants in Yongin differ from those in other locations: they are planted in soil, not pots—like a real garden—and some of the plants are very large, reaching almost to the ceiling of the gallery. Ultraviolet lights nourish the plants at night. It is understood that if

the plants die, they can be replaced by the same species.⁴⁵ The viewer can walk around the garden on a slightly elevated path and observe the installation from all angles but can also view it from a balcony, where it unfolds impressively below the observer. In Yongin, the sculpturally relevant cases of the CRTs are supplemented by new flat-screen TVs. The archive of the center holds a certificate that authorizes the installation.⁴⁶

It is difficult to determine exactly how many instances of *TV Garden* have been realized; my account is not exhaustive. I know of three installations in museum collections (New York, Düsseldorf, and Yongin), though only two of these (Düsseldorf and Yongin) are permanent. Besides these physical manifestations, however, embodiments of *TV Garden* have appeared as simultaneously existing “exhibition copies”—a term used, paradoxically, to designate a quasi-conceptual work that can exist in an iteration exhibited, even at the same time, in different locations.

TV Garden illustrates how a work of art can reappear, again and again, adapted and adapting to changing gallery spaces and technical and social circumstances and executed from (sometimes less-than-specific) instructions. And that history poses a question: How much can an artwork change while maintaining its identity? The “becoming” of the installation—the recurring reenactments of its materialization—creates a chain of processes: assemblage and dismantling, spatial remediation, technical modification. This cycle of reinterpretation is documented, thus providing a posteriori knowledge of the work’s condition and shape at each reinstatement, building a record of institutional acquisitions and loans. *TV Garden* seems to materialize anew each time it is reinstated, relegating its previous materializations to the archive. Yet the archive also anticipates future manifestations of a work. The work is simultaneously a creation of and a contributor to the archive. Henceforth no iteration of *TV Garden* is a return to a past original state—that was the goal of traditional conservation; each one is instead the product of an archive that anticipates its future iterations.

In sum, like many artworks that subscribe to a similar logic, *TV Garden* is both object and nonobject; it exists in a dematerialized form and recurs in distinct material iterations. What, then, makes a particular installation of *TV Garden* a true *TV Garden*? We must answer this question if we wish to understand an installation’s identity in light of its changes. The chapters that follow develop an answer.