



# BROAD BROAD UNDERGROUND UNDERGROUND FILM SERIES FILM SERIES

Global Grooves and Visions

February 12, 2016

***Global Groove***

**(Nam Jun Paik, 1973, 28m)**

“*Global Groove* was Paik’s prophetic statement about the future ubiquity of video. ‘This is a glimpse of a video landscape of tomorrow, when you will be able to switch to any TV station on the earth and TV Guides will be as fat as the Manhattan telephone book,’ he said. His kinetically edited single-channel video anticipated the ‘video cities’ we now inhabit (New York, Shanghai, Seoul), where video screens as high as buildings engulf entire city centers. What Paik was not necessarily predicting was the rapid rise of video as an artistic medium. As video cameras and digital editing equipment have become ever more accessible into the 1990s and now the twenty-first century, video has been adopted by artists worldwide.”

—Michael Rush (2012)

*Global Groove* was first broadcast by the public television station WNET-TV in New York on January 30, 1974, which is significant as Paik was targeting not gallery exhibition but broadcast television, and conceiving of the medium explicitly in relation to Marshal McLuhan’s theory of an impending “global village” brought about by new technologies that enable the instantaneous flow of information around the world. Formally, Paik approaches the potentials of video through a heightened sense of montage particular to the televisual aesthetic—global channel surfing—which in Paik’s utopian construction could “have a phenomenal effect on education and entertainment” around the earth. Content-wise, he flips to and fro amongst popular music, dance, advertising, and avant-garde material, with contributions from John Cage, Allen Ginsberg, and himself in the mix, thus crafting a modernist work that aims for vernacular appeal.

***Loco Metta***

**(Emeka Ogboh, ca. 12m)**

“Emeka Ogboh explores the multidimensionality of Lagos a postcolonial cosmopolitan city famous for its beautiful chaos and functional co-existence of traditional past and modern present.”

—Video Art Network Lagos

The Lagos-Ibadan-Kano Railway, completed in 1911, connected the interior of what was then a British protectorate to the ports of Lagos, then a Crown Colony. Ogboh’s *Loco Metta* reterritorializes this historical infrastructure of the city and transforms the landscape of Ebute Metta, one of its oldest neighborhoods. The video has been described as a “time-based abstracted painting” and a “locomotive dreamscape,” but the video’s visual navigation of a heterotopic urban space cannot be de-linked from the artist’s interest in the Lagos soundscape and expanded notions of listening and hearing. This audiovisual journey explores the history of both the visual and aural infrastructures of the West African city.

***Will I Still Carry Water When I Am a Dead Woman?***

**(Wura Ogunji, 2013. 5-8m)**

“Ogunji’s video captures a public performance at Sabo Market in the heart of Lagos, the largest metropolis in Nigeria. “In this performance, Ogunji and the other women are dressed in matching costumes (with an ‘Afrofuturistic touch’) for more than just aesthetic appeal. Rather Ogunji attempts to conjure images of the Egungun Masquerade, in which women are not typically allowed to perform. In tradition during the Egungun masquerade the masked dancer is allowed to travel anywhere and they are protected (People are not even allowed to touch them); as such, Ogunji builds on the daily task of carrying water, by simultaneously ‘allowing women to occupy a sacred, dynamic, and public space’ through their performance as masked water carriers. In her quest to evoke dynamics between labour and women, *Will I still carry water when I am a dead woman?* is one mere example of how Ogunji’s work excavates the complexities of the relationship between women, society, space and politics.”

—Maryam Kazeem (2013)

***Turbulent***

**(Shirin Neshat, 1998, 9m, double-screen)**

“By 1998 Neshat was making films, shot in 16mm (and later in 35mm) but presented, at least at first, as gallery installations, usually organize so that the visitor to the gallery stands between two projections, which face each other—and sometimes seem to address each other—from opposite walls. In *Turbulent* (1998), for example, a man (Shoja Azari) and a woman (Sussan Deyhim) are seen on opposite sides of the gallery space. First, the man sings a song, to the delight of an all-male audience. After his song has ended and the applause has died down, the woman performs a complex vocal piece. She has no audience and sings no lyrics, but her voice and delivery are evocative and powerful, so powerful that the man on the opposite of the gallery seems mesmerized by her as we are. . . . Neshat focuses on the separation of the sexes in Islamic culture and on the various ways in which this traditional separation is articulated. In *Turbulent* the male singer’s performance is public and verbal, whereas the woman’s is wordless and solitary. . . .”

—Scott Macdonald

***Tooba***

**(Shirin Neshat, 2002, 12m, double-screen)**

Tooba is the name a “tree of paradise” mentioned in the Koran that offers shelter and blessings to those in need. It is also a female name in Persian. Inspired in part by Shahrnough Parsipour’s novel, *Women without Men*, which Neshat later adapted as a feature film in 2010, she filmed it in Oaxaca, Mexico.

“Tooba is originally a mythical character from the Koran, a woman who is also a tree, a sacred tree, a promised tree. After September 11, I started thinking about making a piece that focuses on the idea of a garden—a heaven. In the Islamic and Persian tradition, the garden is a very important symbol both in mystical and political terms. As in many other cultures, in our mystical and poetic tradition a garden becomes a space for spiritual transcendence, a paradise. And within our political language the garden is a place for freedom and independence. I found all those subjects very relevant at the time. . . . *Tooba* was a film that I think many Westerners, particularly Americans, didn’t quite understand. My feeling is that most Americans don’t really get the poetry and symbolism of this piece. Religion and poetry don’t play a big role in American culture. The language of this film is metaphoric, and one must approach it more as a visual poem than as a narrative film. . . . In *our* culture, the use of metaphoric poetic language is the only way of expression for most of us who are not permitted to speak freely. Poetry becomes a political statement, and the public becomes accustomed to reading between the lines.”

—Shirin Neshat