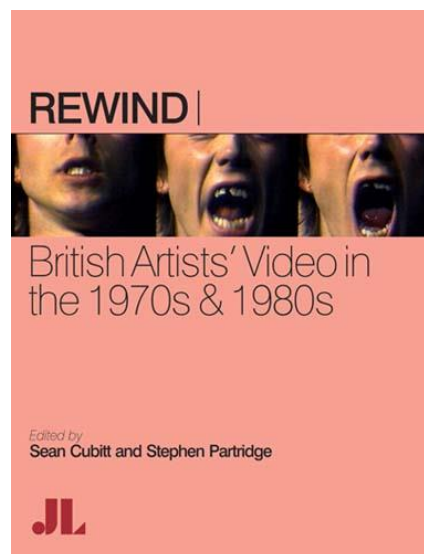


**Rewind: British Artists' Video in the 1970s & 1980s**, ed. by Sean Cubitt and Stephen Partridge. John Libbey Publishing, dist. by Indiana University Press, October 2012. 233 p. ill. ISBN 9780861967063 (cl.), \$40.



The late 1960s and the 1970s witnessed the transformation of a new technology, commercial and consumer video (as opposed to older broadcast video), into a new art form. *Rewind*, edited by Stephen Partridge (video artist and dean of research, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee) and Sean Cubitt (professor of film and TV, Goldsmiths, University of London), explores the history of early video art from a UK perspective. The nine essays in this anthology survey technological factors and conservation issues (Adam Lockhart), institutional history (Malcolm Dickson), events and actors involved in its first decade (Stephen Partridge), and the social, cultural, and political context of media in the 1980s (Sean Cubitt), alongside a range of critical reassessments of the genre by Yvonne Spielmann, Grahame Weinbren, and others.

The book derives from a major research project (funded by the Art and Humanities Research Council, 2004- ongoing) that digitally remastered and archived over 450 works (single screen and installation), digitized ephemera (1,500 documents), recorded new interviews, and created an online database ([www.rewind.ac.uk/rewind/index.php/Database](http://www.rewind.ac.uk/rewind/index.php/Database)) with technical information and a searchable index. In addition to public presentations in the form of exhibitions and other events, a DVD set, *REWIND + PLAY*, was co-produced with LUX in 2009, with a selection of key works from the first decade of artists' video in the UK.

*Rewind* benefits from the multidisciplinary approach of the project, presenting new art historical and critical work based on these collections of original and documentary material, as well as new sources of oral history, alongside conservation and archival research. The loss of artworks and documentation of early video art was, in fact, a primary motivation for it, as this material (Portapak, U-matic, etc.) suffers from both technological obsolescence and media degradation, with content preservation only possible via digital transfer and storage.

A well-produced hardcover, richly illustrated, this book includes many reproductions of rare documentation and video stills, a useful index, reference notes with each essay, and a short general bibliography, mostly dedicated to primary sources (surprisingly, it does not list reference titles like David Curtis, *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain, 1897-2004* (BFI, 2006); or Catherine Elwes, *Video Art: A Guided Tour* (IB Tauris, 2005).

This is an important title on its subject, presenting new information and critical analysis, and would be of interest to most libraries with collections in the fields of art history (contemporary art, British art), film and media history, and conservation studies.

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