

75 IN 25

IMPORTANT ACQUISITIONS AT THE SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART

1990–2015

SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART
1941 • 2016
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

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Nam June Paik (South Korean, 1932–2006)
TV Clock, 1963/1989

24 fixed-image color television monitors mounted on 24 pedestals; color and black-and-white, silent
Installation dimensions variable
Museum Purchase with funds provided by the Grace Jones Richardson Trust, Lillian and Jon B. Lovelace, Leatrice and Eli Luria and the Luria Foundation, Zora and Les Charles and the Cheeryble Foundation, Wendy and Elliot Friedman, and Lord and Lady Ridley-Tree (1999.33a–x)

NAM JUNE PAIK, who studied aesthetics and music in Japan and then participated in Fluxus performances in Europe in the early 1960s, is widely acknowledged as a primary innovator of video art. In 1963 he altered the signals on black and white televisions for his *Zen for TV* sculptures, each with a single fixed image, a line of light on the dark screen.

Paik's *TV Clock* (1963/89) was initially part of these experiments, and then was remade with color televisions. In this installation of 24 monitors on pedestals arranged in a 40-foot arc, he compressed the red, green, and blue colors into a single static white line on each screen, to represent one of the twenty-four hours of the day. The glowing white lines appear in a temporal sequence like the hands on a clock or the linear shadows on a sundial, and move dynamically across the arc of black screens, as the monitors disappear into darkness. While they are "drawn" with electronics, these spare, singular lines also reference concurrent minimalist works in other media, such as Barnett Newman's horizontal and vertical "zips," Agnes Martin's painted pin stripes, and Dan Flavin's fluorescent tube sculptures.

Eventually, all of these white lines will slowly shift and move out of register. At some unknown future date, the television tubes will no longer function—the lines will gradually morph into ghost-like traces, then entirely disappear from the screen. *TV Clock*, therefore, becomes a *memento mori*, reminding us how the material eventually becomes immaterial, time after time.

—KAREN MOSS

