

SANCAI SCENES

Like *Nean's* first *Black Vid* in its German and English versions (*NBV1 and 2*), this film shows an oil on canvas bought at a flea market, which the artist overpainted, partially cut out, and painted on the back. However, unlike *Minor Figures*, the painting was not hand-embroidered but subjected to a cutting out process that sought to preserve several of its original features.

Back and front

Neatly graphic, the precise depiction of a house and garden set in a rural landscape made the original 1960s painting look deliberately conventional. One wonders. Had the artist been commissioned by the property's owner to secure a topographical record? Following that assumption, I thought that if I cut out the house depicted at the core of the composition, its least innovative element would be removed from the front and could be placed at the back. The house was then cut into sections. The larger pieces were placed alongside the big hole, which their transposition from the painted to the unpainted side of the linen canvas had necessitated. Although a hole does not symbolise connection, it can connect spaces. This specimen lets the painting's back and front communicate pictorially. As to the small pieces, they were stuck in all directions, so that the dissected house, which used to dominate the original composition off-centre, could occupy all areas at the back, instead of an obvious one.

Back to the sancai palette

Sancai is a Chinese word meaning three colours. Fashionable in the Tang dynasty, combinations of yellow, brown, and green set the tone for ceramic glazes from tableware to small, medium, and large tomb figures. In China, the appeal of archaeological artefacts on artists and scholars already existed in the Middle Ages and lasted well into the eighteenth century, and beyond. In the West, History of Art tends to be understood as a series of stylistic changes driven by social change and technical innovation. Compare our Renaissance, which rediscovered Antiquity, to the Chinese reinterpretations of Prehistory that have persisted throughout their historical periods. The sancai palette, which flourished from the 7th to the 9th century, reappeared ten centuries later under the reign of the Kangxi Emperor and was still copied in the eighteenth century. Did Qianlong's imperial workshops emulate Tang objects or Kangxi versions of Tang objects? They emulated everything. So, why can't I copy a simple three-colour combination at the back of my kitsch painting? I do not aspire to be original and would rather leave originality to the mentally ill, that is to say to a leading group among them, the narcissists. If only individually obsessed Westerners knew how tedious and ignorant they are...

Sancai scenes / NBV3 / Nean's Black Vid 3 and multipositionism

We started filming *NBV3* in the same manner as *NBV1*, responding to any part of the painting which, when captured by the camera, seemed almost like a complete painting in itself. The two videos differ nonetheless on one major point. Whereas in *NBV1* a scene could move from a section of the painting to any other one, not necessarily

the nearest or next in line, *NBV3* has sequences that concentrate on the same part of the painting. They systematically reveal either more or less painted surface, and less or more black fabric behind and around them. However, rehanging the painting in a variety of positions plays the same important role in both videos.

Humming and overtone singing

The humming noise I made was simultaneously picked up by the camera microphone as we were filming. There is nothing special about that noise, neither originality nor talent. Why should there be? Who is desperate for money and fame? Certainly not the expert Mongolian throat singer whose overtone melodies, thanks to Herbert Wagner's field recording, I was allowed to use for the third part of this video. Fine, but what happened to the second? A technical problem that we did not correct; the microphone did not work for a while. The noisy scenes became silent.

Date: 12th October 2025

Duration: 6 minutes and 11 seconds

Themes: Black vids, multipositionism, multipositionist videography, double-sided paintings, acrylic on oil on canvas, undertone and overtone singing, individual and collective mentalities.

Thumb

