

MINOR FIGURES

The video shows an oil on canvas bought at a flea market, which the artist partially cut out, hand-embroidered and painted over on the front and, for the first time in its history, also painted on the back. These additional layers distorted the original painting's representational and figural elements beyond recognition.

Minor figures / NBV2 / Nean's Black Vid 2

Although an aggressive response to a painting's subject matter suggests a lack of recognition of artworks purchased only to be modified, this approach does in no way deride Sunday painters. Brushstrokes, colour blends and motifs from the original painting are preserved. Not everything disappears. Working on and with a low-rated oil on canvas entails at least part acceptance and appreciation.

Nean's general interest in every art form and movement excludes an overarching art-historical differentiation obsessed with high-calibre examples and masterpieces. Amateur paintings are therefore not denied the right to inspire the artist. Ancient, antique, old, modern and contemporary, classic and vintage achievements, as well as kitsch, spare and leisure-time artistic pursuits, including even some dallying with creativity, may all exert a legitimate influence.

Black vids and multipositionism

The German and English versions of the first black video (respectively, *Black Vids 1 & 2*) have differently ordered sequences; yet all solely concerned with filming aspects of one double-sided painting. Thanks to a black fabric stretched in the background, the chosen studio lighting shines exclusively on the object to which the film is dedicated, thereby enabling sharp, detailed close-ups. Accordingly, the term "black vids" could be considered to belong to genre terminology. It refers to videos that capture an artwork visually isolated against a dark, light absorbing background.

Each close-up focuses on a small or medium-sized part of the painting, which includes or excludes (parts of) the painted frame and/or the black background. When a close-up exhibits enough colour contrast and compositional strength to attract the viewer's full attention, that scene may merit the accolade of artwork. In the worst case, scenes show a part of the painting which the viewer may remember in relation to the entire painting or other filmed sections. However, at best, a filmed part of the painting looks not only like a precisely framed section of that painting, but also, almost or completely, like a new picture. If a successfully filmed detail gives the strong impression of being a picture by itself, it has acquired a quasi-independent composition by exceeding its value as a detail belonging to a larger picture.

The term multipositionism refers to any technique that facilitates the perception of visually arresting changes in an artwork's composition displayed in a variety of positions.

Genre precedents

The most obvious precedents to the *black vids* in Western art are portraits, mythological and religious paintings by Lucas Cranach the Younger and the Older, whose black or otherwise monochrome background highlight a central subject matter. With Caravaggio and his followers, a dramatic technique (*chiaroscuro*) departs from the idea of plain monochrome by modulating contrasts between light and darkness. Less technically dependent on visually striking effects, Goya's Black Paintings (*las pinturas negras*) play symbolic, psychological and physical types of darkness against one another. Whereas a saturated black background forms an essential component within a Cranach's painting, *Nean's Black Vids* outline the non-painted element(s) of a double-side painting, namely a black expanse or black expanses, visible (not inside but) outside the framed painting and/or beneath its cutout surface. Nevertheless, *Nean's Black Vids* still relate more systematically to the Cranachs than to other painters of offset backgrounds.

Date: 18th June 2025

Duration: 2 minutes and 59 seconds

Themes: Black vids, multipositionism, multipositionist videography, double-sided paintings, acrylic on oil on canvas, hand embroidered painted canvas, recycled art, artistic pastime and professional art

Thumb

