

KEN GILL slams British product:

**DOES GOOD
VIDEOART
EXIST IN
BRITAIN,
OR IS
IT ALL
TEDIOUS?**

In Germany, The European Media Art Network (EMAN), an 8 country simultaneous Video screening, took place in familiarly chic surroundings at NGBK here in Berlin.

The wit, acuteness and diversity of work from Belgium made theirs the most palatable programme by a long chalk. The German stuff was, well . . . Teutonic: very competently executed, a bit weird in places, but lacking any genuine 'madness'.

The prospect of seeing what new developments had taken place in British video over the last year encouraged me to sit out 50 minutes of the most turgid vids Holland could offer.

Everyone knows that 'video is the mass medium of the late 20th Century, etc' (yawn). But, as far as I can see, the small number of (so called) video artists that represent Britain internationally have not been told. The majority seem content to continue pottering about with a porta-pak.

By contrast, a week later The Duvet Brothers were in Berlin doin'-their-thang in a tent on a piece of waste land. The night I saw their show, they were scratching on 20 monitors to an estimated audience of 8 (3 perched transitorially on bicycles).

Any comparisons between this and the LVA effort a week previously were halting.

It succinctly illustrated the degree to which the established video artists and their sponsors, have lost their way.

The Duvet's stuff had sparkle, poignancy and guts. Quite a recipe! Containing all those ingredients live mediums are supposed to have, you know? But then their whole approach is different. The way they grab post-production time for free, their originality in the way they handle political and aesthetic issues, and their overall intelligence: They know where they are going, and they have a good idea to whom they wish to address their work.

Something tells me that theirs is a much more healthy and realistic approach than many of those currently permeating the claustrophobic world of British video art.