

# The Museum of Modern Art

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS *SIGNALS: HOW VIDEO TRANSFORMED THE WORLD*, A MAJOR EXHIBITION EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF VIDEO, ART, AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

**This Collection-Based Multimedia Exhibition Features Works by John Akomfrah, Gretchen Bender, Dara Birnbaum, Tony Cokes, Amar Kanwar, Marta Minujín, Nam June Paik, Sondra Perry, Martine Syms, and More**

**NEW YORK, October 13, 2022 [Updated April 7, 2023]**—Offering a timely examination of video, art, and the public sphere, The Museum of Modern Art presents ***Signals: How Video Transformed the World***, a major exhibition on view in the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Center for Special Exhibitions from March 5 through July 8, 2023. Through a diverse range of nearly 100 works, drawn primarily from MoMA's collection, *Signals* examines the ways in which artists have both championed and questioned video as an agent of social change—from televised revolution to electronic democracy. The presentation positions video not as a traditional medium but as a transformational media network, one that has fundamentally altered the world. *Signals* is organized by Stuart Comer, The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance, and Michelle Kuo, The Marlene Hess Curator of Painting and Sculpture.

*Signals* investigates the ways in which artists such as John Akomfrah and Black Audio Film Collective, Gretchen Bender, Dara Birnbaum, Tony Cokes, Chto Delat, Song Dong, Harun Farocki, Amar Kanwar, Dana Kavelina, Marta Minujín, Carlos Motta, New Red Order, Nam June Paik, Tiffany Sia, Martine Syms, Ming Wong, Nil Yalter, and many others have used video over the past five decades to pose urgent questions about the singular impact that electronic media have had on participatory democracy, identity politics, economic access, and technological power. Collectively, the works and artists in the exhibition confront the ways in which the physical world has merged with the virtual, and reveal a history that is global, critical, and activist from its very beginnings.

“Video became widely accessible as a consumer technology in the 1960s, but it also became subject to total commercial and governmental control in nations around the globe,” said Michelle Kuo. She continued, “Today, vastly accelerated by the pandemic, video is ever-present—on phones, on computer screens, shaping our ideas and our politics, spreading disinformation, documentation, evidence, and fervor. We see video as a tool of persuasion and propaganda, but also as a means of witnessing and resistance. The artists in *Signals* explore the dizzying rise and range of video, but also present trenchant critiques of these formats and technologies.”

**MoMA**

Stuart Comer added, “Many of the works in the exhibition have been recently acquired and never before seen at MoMA, while others demonstrate the Museum’s groundbreaking engagement with video from the 1960s on. While video is now a pervasive and defining aspect of contemporary life, it is an unruly and elusive artform that has created institutional challenges since its inception. *Signals* marks almost 50 years since the groundbreaking gathering ‘Open Circuits: An International Conference on the Future of Television’ took place at MoMA in 1974, helping to catalyze a community of artists, curators, critics, and educators to champion the medium. Since that time, the Museum has continued to collect and preserve video in its many forms and today holds one of the largest international media collections. *Signals*, primarily drawn from MoMA’s collection, traces the history of an art form that has never been bound completely within the Museum’s walls, one that has been directly connected to the social and political pulse of the last half century.”

Presented both in the galleries and on a special online channel on [moma.org](https://mom.org/signals), *Signals* enables audiences to experience video art’s varied viewing conditions, sites of display, and geographic reach, from closed-circuit experiments to viral video, from agitation to persuasion, from forensic evidence to alternative facts. The exhibition shows how artists use video to probe society, communication, and democracy. Many of the works on view are large-scale installations whose examination of contested landscapes and territories parallel their experimental and immersive approach to the exhibition space. Notably, Stan VanDerBeek’s *Movie Drome* (1965), an “experience machine” conceived as a prototype for a global telecommunications system, was recently acquired by the Museum and is reconstructed at full scale for the first time. Additionally, the exhibition will include recent works such as Sondra Perry’s *Double Quadruple Etcetera Etcetera* (2013), which explores a contemporary scenario in which interactivity, visibility, and liveness is the norm, but in which all too many bodies have nevertheless been violently suppressed, policed, and erased.

## **THE SIGNALS CHANNEL**

A selection of single-channel video works from the Museum’s extensive collection is available for viewing on the *Signals* Channel, at [moma.org/signals/channel](https://mom.org/signals/channel).

## **COLLECTION GALLERIES**

**Gallery 213: *Sandra Mujinga’s Flo***

**Gallery 214: *Limits of Control***

In addition to the sixth-floor presentation, *Signals* extends into two of MoMA’s collection galleries and the Kravis Studio. Sandra Mujinga’s *Flo*, a single-work installation, and *Limits of Control*, which features two works by American Artist, are currently on view in galleries 213 and 214, respectively.

## **THE MARIE-JOSÉE AND HENRY KRAVIS STUDIO**

***Lawrence Abu Hamdan: Walled Unwalled and Other Monologues***

**April 8–June 11, 2023**

Opening to the public on April 8, 2023, in the Kravis Studio, *Lawrence Abu Hamdan: Walled Unwalled and Other Monologues* is also presented in conjunction with *Signals*. As a practitioner of “forensic listening,” Abu Hamdan examines the capacity of sound—and the

physiological act of hearing—to exonerate and incriminate. His video *Walled Unwalled* (2018) investigates how information transmitted through walls—both by sophisticated surveillance technology and the human senses alone—has been used as evidence in courts of law and instrumentalized as a tool of the state. For this exhibition and program of performances, *Walled Unwalled* will be adapted for the Kravis Studio; the work, itself a solo performance for camera, will be presented alongside a series of live performances, or “audiovisual essays,” by the artist: *After SFX* (2018), *Air Pressure* (2021), and *Natq* (2019).

*Lawrence Abu Hamdan: Walled Unwalled and Other Monologues* is organized by Ana Janevski, Curator, and Erica Papernik-Shimizu, Associate Curator, with May Makki, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance. Performances are produced by Lizzie Gorfaine, Associate Director and Producer, and Kate Scherer, Manager and Producer, with Olivia Rousey, Assistant Performance Coordinator, Performance and Live Programs.

The Kravis Studio will host a series of ticketed performances by Abu Hamdan, with three works each being presented in two evening performances and one matinee performance over three weeks during the exhibition:

*After SFX* (2018)

Saturday, April 8, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 9, 3:00 p.m.\*

Monday, April 10, 8:00 p.m.

Following the performance on April 9, the artist will appear in conversation with curator Ana Janevski.

*Air Pressure* (2021)

Friday, June 2, 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 3, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 4, 3:00 p.m.\*

*Natq* (2019)

Friday, June 9, 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 10, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 11, 3:00 p.m.\*

Capacity for all performances is limited; tickets may be purchased on [moma.org](https://momamuseum.org) beginning one month before each performance date.

\*The installation of Lawrence Abu Hamdan’s *Walled Unwalled* will be closed during regular Museum hours on April 9, June 4, and June 11, except for the 3:00 p.m. performances.

**Modern Mondays**

This long-running screening series—building upon the legacy of the Cineprobe (1968–2002) and Video Viewpoints (1978–2002) programs—is a home for moving-image experimentation and innovation at MoMA. Modern Mondays invites artists working in film and video to present their work in an intimate setting, with each evening presenting a unique opportunity for audiences to engage in dialogue with the artists, along with curators and other guests. A platform for both emerging artists and trailblazing figures who have changed the way we think

about the moving image, this series premieres new projects, revisits landmark film and video practices, and explores interdisciplinary engagement with performance, sound, technology, and Web-based art. The following Modern Monday events will be presented in conjunction with *Signals*:

**An Evening with Tiffany Sia**

Artist, filmmaker, and writer Tiffany Sia presents three recent works, including *What Rules the Invisible* (2022), which reassembles fragments of amateur footage shot in Hong Kong. Sia will discuss video's relationship to power, dissent, and social change with artist and writer Aria Dean.

Monday, May 1, 7:00 p.m.

**An Evening with CAMP**

CAMP is a collaborative studio based in Mumbai, cofounded in 2007 by Shaina Anand and Ashok Sukumaran. This performance lecture and screening builds on their longstanding efforts to transform everyday CCTV surveillance systems into tools for filmmaking and critical reflection on the possibilities and limits of digital technologies and networks.

Monday, May 15, 7:00 p.m.

**LECTURE/PANEL**

How has video opened up new possibilities for social change over the past six decades?

Artists Dara Birnbaum, Amar Kanwar, and members of the collective New Red Order (NRO) join Stuart Comer, The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance, and Michelle Kuo, The Marlene Hess Curator of Painting and Sculpture, to discuss the legacy of video as a means of collective action and political transformation. This program is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Signals: How Video Transformed the World*.

Wednesday, May 3, 6:00–7:30 p.m., T3

**PUBLICATIONS:**

The accompanying catalogue—the Museum's first major publication on the subject in nearly 30 years—includes an introductory essay by curators Stuart Comer and Michelle Kuo; five major essays and interviews by leading scholars and artists that investigate histories of video, art, and the public sphere; individual texts on selected works, by authors including Ina Blom, Pamela M. Lee, and Glenn Ligon; and a timeline that traces the development of video broadcasting networks around the globe. A riveting appraisal of art, video, and social change—from televised revolutions to viral video—the catalogue poses urgent questions about culture, technology, and democracy. 180 pages, 140 color illustrations. Paperback with jacket, \$45. ISBN: 978-1-63345-123-0.

**SPONSORSHIP:**



The exhibition is made possible by Hyundai Card.

Leadership support is provided by the Jill and Peter Kraus Endowed Fund for Contemporary Exhibitions.

Major funding is provided by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, the Wallis Annenberg Director's Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art, and the Thomas H. Lee and Ann Tenenbaum Endowed Fund.

Additional support is provided by the Annual Exhibition Fund. Leadership contributions to the Annual Exhibition Fund, in support of the Museum's collection and collection exhibitions, are generously provided by the Sandra and Tony Tamer Exhibition Fund, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Eva and Glenn Dubin, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, Anne Dias, Kenneth C. Griffin, Alice and Tom Tisch, the Marella and Giovanni Agnelli Fund for Exhibitions, Mimi Haas, The David Rockefeller Council, The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Kathy and Richard S. Fuld, Jr., The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, and Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder.

Major contributions to the Annual Exhibition Fund are provided by Emily Rauh Pulitzer, The Sundheim Family Foundation, and Karen and Gary Winnick.

Major support for the publication is provided by The Museum of Modern Art's Research and Scholarly Publications endowment established through the generosity of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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