Video is everywhere—on our phones and screens, on our walls and streets, defining spaces and experiences, spreading memes, lies, fervor, and power. Shared, sent, and networked, it shapes public opinion and creates new publics. In other words, video has pervaded all aspects of life.

Signals: How Video Transformed the World explores the ways in which artists have both championed and questioned video as an agent of social change, inventing tools, forms, and ideas in the process. Since its debut as a consumer technology in the 1960s, video has been seen by artists as a tool of persuasion and propaganda, but also as a means of witnessing and resistance. Some artists have protested the rise of commercial and state control over information, vision, and truth itself. Others have hoped to create entirely different networks of communication, democratic engagement, and public participation.

This exhibition features more than seventy works, drawn primarily from MoMA's collection, with many never before shown at the Museum. Whether sculptural installation or single-channel broadcast, these works reveal how media have changed—and changed us—over the past six decades, from physical experience to virtual connection, from televised revolutions to closed-circuit surveillance to social networks. *Signals* invites us to experience the ways in which artists have used video's wildly varied formats, settings, and global reach to ask urgent questions about society and propose new models of public life.

Organized by Stuart Comer, The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance, and Michelle Kuo, The Marlene Hess Curator of Painting and Sculpture, with Erica Papernik-Shimizu, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance, Lina Kavaliunas, Curatorial Assistant, Piper Marshall, Exhibition Coordinator, Eana Kim, Marica and Jan Vilcek Fellow, and Rattanamol Singh Johal, former Mellon-Marron Research Consortium Fellow, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

Thanks to Athena Holbrook, Dana Liljegren, Wong Binghao, and Simon Wu.

Hyundai Card

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.

We invite you to explore the accompanying publication, *Signals: How Video Transformed the World*, which is available in the Museum Store.

For related content and programs, visit moma.org/signals. #Signals #SignalsMoMA

Live and Direct

Video is live: unlike traditional artistic media, it can be instantly transmitted; it depends on being sent, on destinations rather than origins, on signals *here* relaying events *there* in an instant. In the 1960s and '70s, as video technology became increasingly accessible, artists

began to experiment with closed-circuit cameras and live feeds. They could record, create, and broadcast their own video in real time without extensive equipment or large studios.

At the same time, video and television became subject to near-total corporate and governmental control just as, today, digital video content and social media are dominated by global tech platforms. What seems "live" may, in fact, be anything but. Experimenting with performance, interactivity, intervention, and feedback, the artists in this gallery disrupt the scripted action of conventional television, or the constructed reality of the news show, surveillance feed, or live stream, creating subversive forms of immediacy. Their works talk back, in the here and now.

Electronic Democracy

Around the world, the rise of broadcast television created vast new audiences for mass media. Telecommunications and research satellites—from Sputnik in 1957, to Telstar in 1962, to Aryabhata in 1975—were launched as avatars of the Cold War space race. By the 1980s, such

communication systems had become fully global in reach and were operated primarily by state or commercial interests. Artists dreamed of creating alternatives. They hoped to transform television from a top-down, one-way transmission system into a truly participatory network of multi-way feedback, communication, and exchange: as artist Nam June Paik and composer John Cage put it, a form of "electronic democracy."

Suddenly, through both mainstream channels and pirate television, artworks could reach millions of people. At the same time, artist collectives gathered in sites from Los Angeles to Tokyo to Santiago to create smaller-scale broadcasting networks that reached new publics. They challenged surveillance, corporate control, and governmental censorship and data harvesting; they created news footage of events and issues not covered

by mainstream media; they staged surreal performances.

They tuned in and dropped out; they turned the media



Spaces of Appearance

Today, it seems as if all the revolutionary dreams of video the participatory network, multi-way communication, the democratization and decentralization of information may have been realized, for better or worse. Video as social media means an unprecedented proliferation

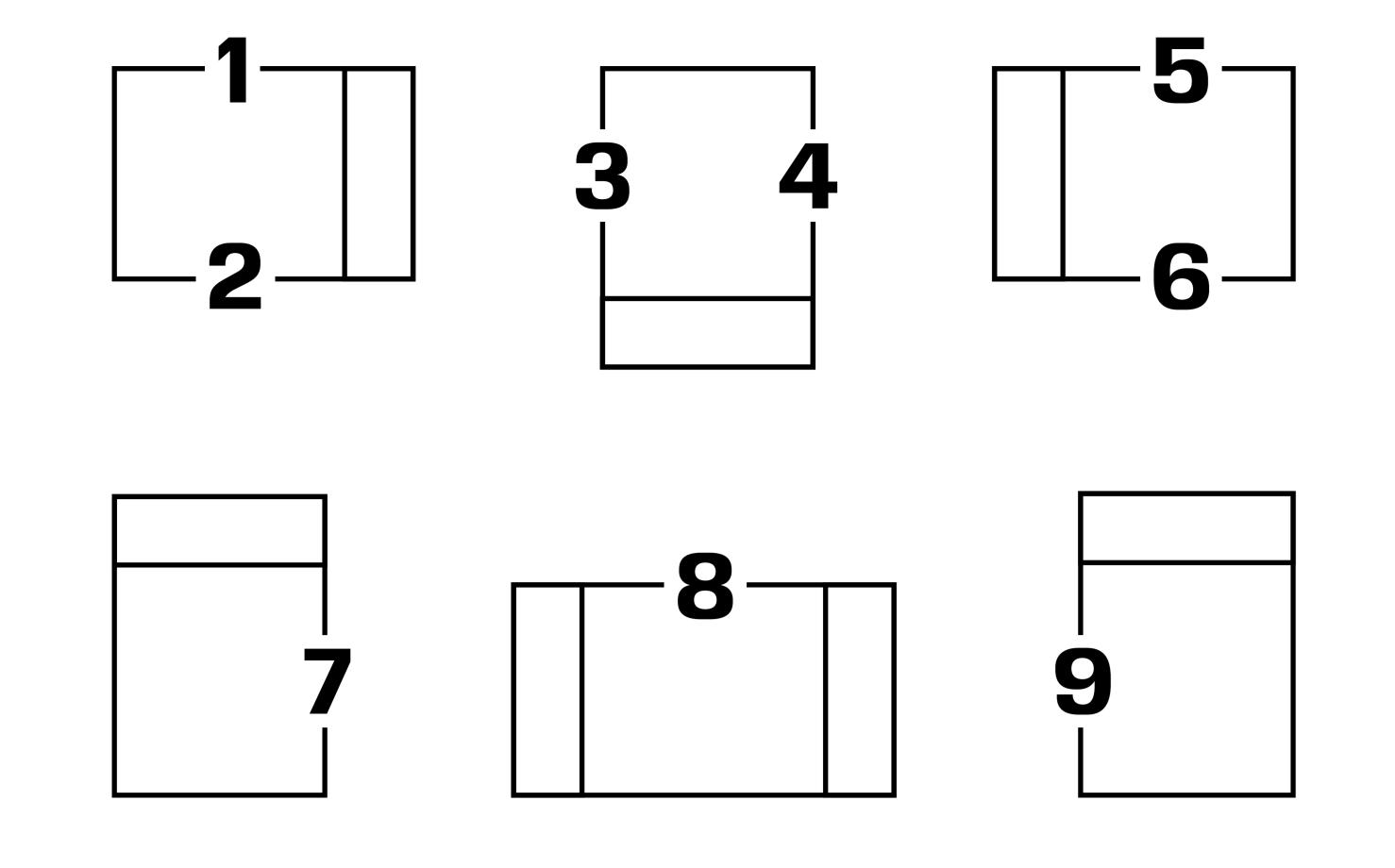
of public spheres. But it also means the disintegration of those publics into a seemingly limitless series of echo chambers. The decentralization of information has not necessarily led to the redistribution of power. Talking back—feedback—is all too often assimilated into systems of control. And, in turn, new voices of authoritarianism have learned to overload the system, to flood all signals with noise.

In this age of inundation, artists propose ways of evading the all-seeing oculus of facial recognition and biometric surveillance. They explore how political movements are represented in public space and virtual networks; how monuments may be erected and toppled; how bodies may form organized movements or, alternately, try to disappear. They aim to find new publics and politics and forms of communion amid the din—sending signals and, perhaps,

transforming the world.

Video Platform

Each of these viewing stations presents a thematic program composed of singlechannel video works from the Museum's extensive collection.



Unless otherwise indicated, all works are standard-definition video.

A selection of these and related video works is available for viewing on the Signals Channel, at moma.org/signals/channel.



Viral Video

In these works from the 1960s to the '80s, the conventions of corporate broadcast television were turned into critical tools. Exploiting video technology's ability to record and reshape, artists inserted their works into communications networks, disrupting television's relentless flow of information in order to probe the medium's seeming neutrality.

Nam June Paik

Richard Serra

(American, born 1938)

(American, born 1949)

Color, sound; 6 min.

Barbara Pine, 1975

Carlota Fay Schoolman

Television Delivers People. 1973

The Museum of Modern Art. New York.

Acquired through the generosity of

(American, born Korea. 1932–2006) *Electronic Opera #1*. 1969 Color, sound; 4:45 min. GBH Archives

Nam June Paik (American, born Korea. 1932–2006) Jud Yalkut (American, 1938–2013) *Video Tape Study No. 3*. 1967–69/1992 Black and white, sound; 4:01 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Barbara Wise, 1991 General Idea (Canada, active 1969–1994) *Test Tube*. 1979 Color, sound; 28:15 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1999

Martha Rosler (American, born 1943) *If It's Too Bad to Be True, It Could Be DISINFORMATION*. 1985 Color, sound; 16:26 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist and Galerie Nagel, Berlin, 2012

4 Everyday Life

Artists experiment with video formats and networks to reflect on personal history and experience—grappling with the intimate consequences of displacement, occupation, war, and labor.

Mako Idemitsu

(Japanese, born 1940) *Another Day of a Housewife*. 1977–78 Color, sound; 18 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist, 1979

Mona Hatoum

(British-Palestinian, born 1952) *Measures of Distance*. 1988 Color, silent; 15:25 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 2000

Regina José Galindo

(Guatemalan, born 1974) *America's Family Prison*. 2008 Color, silent; 54:49 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros through the Latin American and Caribbean Fund in honor of Agnes Gund and The Art for Justice Fund, 2017 Yau Ching (Chinese, born 1966) *Flow*. 1993 Color, sound; 38 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1999

Xu Zhen (Chinese, born 1977) *Shouting*. 1998 Color, sound; 3:52 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 2004

7 Surveillance

This groundbreaking video essay—which is composed of footage from remote-controlled, closed-circuit cameras located in public spaces across Berlin—presents an omnipresent and anonymous surveillance apparatus that sees everything without being seen.

Michael Klier Der Riese (The Giant). 1983 Black and white and color, sound; 82 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Committee on Media and Performance Funds, 1984

2 Body Politics

Training the camera on the human figure, these video works explore the increasingly entangled links between private action, personal identity, and public life.

VALIE EXPORT
(Austrian, born 1940) *Body Politics*. 1974
Black and white, sound; 2:16 min.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Gift of VALIE EXPORT and Miryam and
Daniel Charim, 2012

Anna Bella Geiger (Brazilian, born 1933) *Passagens 1 (Passages 1*). 1974 Black and white, sound; 9:55 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1991

Letícia Parente (Brazilian, 1930–1991) *Preparação I (Preparation I*). 1975 Black and white, sound; 3:31 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Latin American and Caribbean Fund, 2017

Sanja Iveković

(Croatian, born 1949) *Osobni rezovi (Personal Cuts*). 1982
Color, sound; 4 min.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Gift of Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G.
Farley, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro,
Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, and
Committee on Media and Performance
Art Funds, 2011

Carlos Leppe (Chilean, 1952–2015)

Acción de la estrella (Star Action). 1979 Color, sound; 20 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Pedro Montes through the Latin American and Caribbean Fund, 2018

Marlon Riggs (American, 1957–1994)

Anthem. 1991
Black and white and color, sound; 9 min.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Gift of Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley,
Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro,
and Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, 2010

5 Front Lines

Using methods of documentation, appropriation, fiction, and performance, the artists featured here confront the experience of war—and challenge its depiction in mass media.

David Cort

(American, 1935–2020) *Mayday Realtime*. 1971 Black and white, sound; 59:45 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1989

Wolf Vostell

(German, 1932–1998) *Vietnam*. 1968–71/1972 Black and white, sound; 7:39 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Committee on Media and Performance Art Funds, 2015

Rea Tajiri

(American, born 1958) *History and Memory*. 1991 Black and white and color, sound; 32 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1992 Walid Raad (Lebanese, born 1967)

Souheil Bachar Hostage: The Bachar Tapes (English Version). 2001 Color, sound; 16:17 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Jerome Foundation in honor of

its founder, Jerome Hill, 2003

8 Territory

Artists actively rethink cultural identity in the age of electronic communication: challenging the tropes of traditional ethnographic documentary, questioning the presumption of a seamlessly networked world, and using video technology to reconsider historical signs and emblems.

Juan Downey (Chilean, 1940–1993) *The Laughing Alligator*. 1979 Black and white and color, sound; 27 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Gloria Kirby Conahy Fund, 1980

Victor Masayevsa Jr. (Native American, born 1951) *Ritual Clowns*. 1988 Color, sound; 18 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1981 Peter Callas
(Australian, born 1952) *NEO-GEO: An American Purchase*. 1989
Color, sound; 9:17 min.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Acquired through the generosity of
The Contemporary Arts Council of The
Museum of Modern Art, 1991

3 Direct Address

The artists in this program confront the power dynamics between audience and performer. Co-opting the face-to-face format of television interviews and news reports, they speak directly to the camera, assume alternate personalities, or invite audience feedback, revealing the screen to be a threshold between often conflicting realities.

Dan Graham (American, 1942–2022) *Performer/Audience/Mirror*. 1975 Black and white, sound; 22:52 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, and Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, 2009

Howardena Pindell
(American, born 1943) *Free, White and 21*. 1980
Color, sound; 12:15 min.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Gift of Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G.
Farley, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, and Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, 2008

Jaime Davidovich (American, born Argentina. 1936–2016) *The Live! Show (April 29, 1983)*. 1983 Color, sound; 27 min. Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York Jaime Davidovich (American, born Argentina. 1936–2016) *The Live! Show Promo*. 1982 Color, sound; 5:32 min. Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Lynn Hershman Leeson (American, born 1941) *Seduction of a Cyborg*. 1994 Color, sound; 7 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Modern Women's Fund, 2012

Wu Tsang (American, born 1982) *The Shape of a Right Statement*. 2008 High-definition video (color, sound), 5 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Committee on Media and Performance Art Funds, 2014

6 Public Access

These works explored—or even invented—video and telecommunications networks to create new modes of connection, collective experience, and assembly.

Liza Béar

(British, born 1942) **Keith Sonnier** (American, 1941–2020) *Send/Receive I* and *Send/Receive II*. 1977 Color, sound; 61:40 min. Video Data Bank, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Kit Galloway

(American, born 1948)
Sherrie Rabinowitz
(American, 1950–2013)
Hole in Space: A Public Communication
Sculpture. 1980
Black and white, sound; 30 min.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Purchase, 1983

Jaime Davidovich (American, born Argentina. 1936–2016) *QUBE Project*. 1980 Color, sound; 10:32 min. Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

9 Counter Media

Artists have used and misused video technology since it first emerged, countering the visual norms of commercial television and mass media with humor, anger, and subversion.

Ant Farm (United States, founded 1968) *Media Burn*. 1975–2003 Color, sound; 23:02 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Celeste Bartos and as a gift of Chip Lord, 1980

Ulysses Jenkins (American, born 1946) *Mass of Images*. 1978 Black and white, sound; 4:19 min. Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Eder Santos

(Brazilian, born 1960) *Essa coisa nervosa* (*This Nervous Thing*). 1991 Color, sound; 15:26 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist, 1992 Marcelo Tas (Brazilian, born 1959) Fernando Meirelles (Brazilian, born 1955) Varela in Serra Pelada. 1984 Color, sound; 20 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1994

Muntadas (Spanish, born 1942) Marshall Reese (American, born 1955) *Political Advertisement X: 1952–2020*. 2020 Standard- and high-definition video (black and white and color, sound), 92 min. Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York