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NEWS RELEASE

The Media Test Wall Presents

*Video Trajectories (Redux):
Selections from the MIT List Visual Arts
Center New Media Collection*

featuring works by
Bruce Nauman, Dara Birnbaum, Bill Viola, Nam June Paik and Gary Hill

Viewing Hours: Daily 24 Hours

Cambridge, MA – September 2008. The MIT List Visual Arts Center's Media Test Wall presents *Video Trajectories (Redux): Selections from the MIT List Visual Arts Center New Media Collection*. This five-part exhibition series features selections from the List Center's exhibition *Video Trajectories* (October 12-December 30, 2007) which was originally organized by MIT Professor Caroline A. Jones. The five selections in *Video Trajectories (Redux)*, considered masterworks from video art history were acquired to become part of the MIT List Center's New Media Collection. This exhibition re-introduces these works to a broader public:

September 12-October 10

Bruce Nauman

Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk), 1968

Video, black-and-white, sound, 60 minutes

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For Bruce Nauman, the video camera is an indispensable studio tool and witness. Barely edited, a characteristic Nauman tape from the late '60s shows the artist laconically following some absurd set of directions for an extended amount of time within the vague purview of a video camera mounted at a seemingly random angle in relation to the action. *Slow Angle Walk* is a classic of the genre, reflecting the artist's interest in Irish playwright Samuel Beckett, whose characters announce, "Let's go!" while the stage directions read, "No one moves."

October 13-November 14

Dara Birnbaum

Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman, 1978-79

Video, color, sound, 5 minutes 50 seconds

Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

Trained in architecture and painting, Birnbaum early on understood the estranging power of repetition. Here she drew on kinescope technology (film shot from a television monitor) to enable her to make a video compilation of "found" footage snatched from the broadcast series *Wonder Woman* (televised from 1976-1979). A pioneering example of "sampling" from a still-analog age, Birnbaum's *Technology/Transformation* focuses in on the transformative "bursts" when actress Lynda Carter

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becomes a super-she-ro. Addressing the ecstatic moment of amplified female power (before the ambivalent discharge of female aggression), the artist announced her interest in "arresting moments of TV time for the viewer, which would then allow for examination and questioning."

November 17-January 2

Bill Viola

The Space Between the Teeth, 1976

Videotape, color, mono sound, 9 minutes 10 seconds

Bill Viola came to video from his experience touring with avant-garde composer and performer David Tudor, bringing an acute sensibility of audiotape manipulation to early video art. Some early video works involved slowing vocal frequencies to barely audible drones, amplifying dripping water to the boom of a kettledrum, or otherwise enlisting sound in deeply unsettling ways. In this tape however, sound is presented at its most primitive, as the camera lunges in to capture the artist's full-throated scream. The video, which was part of a group called "Four Songs," in fact refuses music, words, or narrative (the conventional components of a "song"), as if to suggest that video-and emotion-should be able to communicate at a more basic level.

January 5-January 30

Nam June Paik

Video Synthesizer and "TV Cello" Collectibles, 1965-71

Video, color silent, 23 minutes, 35 seconds

Video Synthesizer and "TV Cello" Collectibles, 1965-71 is a well known recording of Nam June Paik's video manipulations, and shows the psychedelic effects achieved by the Paik-Abe synthesizer, which mixed live broadcast feeds with stored videotape imagery and signal-distorting "noise. Paik is widely considered today as among the first and greatest of the 60s generation of video pioneers. He wrote prescient manifestos about the radical potential of the medium and its ultimate triumph in both art and culture.

February 2-March 6

Gary Hill

Soundings, 1979

Video, color, sound, 18 minutes 3 seconds

Courtesy of the artist.

Hill's *Soundings* are quite literal, focusing exclusively on the interior drum of a speaker system conveying hypnotic phrases such as "sounding the image, imaging the sound...touching down, touching sound." We see a speaker, but never *the* speaker. Our sympathies gravitate toward the mechanical device at the center of our gaze, as it valiantly attempts to convey the artist's words while being twirled, pushed, covered with sand, burned, lacerated with nails, and submerged by water. The implicit struggle between soundtrack and seductive image is dramatically enacted.

All descriptions were excerpted from "Video Trajectories" by Caroline A. Jones, as published in *Sounding the Subject/Video Trajectories*, Cambridge: MIT List Visual Arts Center, 2007.

Artist Biographies:

Bruce Nauman (born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1941) lives and works in Galisteo, New Mexico.

Working in video, sculpture, and installation since the 1960s, Bruce Nauman began working in film while teaching at the San Francisco Art Institute. He produced his first videotapes in 1968, using his body to explore the limits of everyday situations. He has participated in Documentas IV, V, and VII in

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Kassel, Germany, as well as the Whitney Biennials, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York in 1984, 1991, and 1997. Solo exhibitions include *Bruce Nauman: Work from 1965 to 1972*, organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York (1981), and *Bruce Nauman*, a traveling retrospective organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C. (1997–99). He has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1968); the Max Beckmann Prize, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany (1993); and the Aldrich Prize, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut (1995). He was awarded the Leone d'Oro Prize at the 48th Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy in 1999.

Dara Birnbaum (born in New York, NY, 1946) lives and works in New York, New York. An architect and urban planner by training, Dara Birnbaum began using video in 1978 while teaching at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. She was one of the first video artists to appropriate television images as a subversive strategy to reveal their subtexts. Retrospective exhibitions of her work were presented at the Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria and the Norrtelje Konsthall, Norrtelje Sweden; and she has participated in Documentas VII, VIII, and IX in Kassel, Germany; the Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy; the Bienal de Valencia, Valencia, Spain; and "media_city seoul 2000" in Seoul, South Korea.

Bill Viola (born in New York, New York, 1951) lives and works in Long Beach, California. During the 1970s Bill Viola was technical director of production for Art/Tapes/22 in Florence, Italy (one of the first video art studios in Europe) and a member of David Tudor's Rainforest Ensemble from 1973-80. Viola creates videotapes, architectural video installations, sound environments, electronic music performances, and works for television broadcast. His installations envelop the viewer in image and sound, employ state-of-the-art technologies, and explore the senses as a means self-knowledge. His works have roots in Eastern and Western art and spiritual traditions. Viola represented the United States at the 46th Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy in 1995. In 1997 the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, organized *Bill Viola: A 25-Year Survey*. He received a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1989, and the first Medienkunstpreis in 1993, presented jointly by Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany and Siemens Kulturprogramm, in Germany. He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2000 and was awarded Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Government in 2006.

Nam June Paik (born in Seoul, South Korea, 1932; died in 2006). Working as a video artist, performance artist, musician, sculptor, filmmaker, writer, and teacher, Nam June Paik was a prolific artist. His association with the Fluxus movement resulted in a diverse range of artistic practices including performance art, experimental music, and "anti-films". Paik, however, is best known for his video installations. In some, Paik modified old television sets to create sculptural assemblages. In others, he modified circuitry or fitted television cabinets with new components to draw attention to reconstituted versions of broadcast signals. By engaging directly with the broadcast signal process Paik often created dazzling sequences of electronic effects. His pioneering work inspired a new generation of artists interested in working with video as an art form.

Solo exhibitions include *Global Groove*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, Germany (2004); *Nam June Paik*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2004); *The Worlds of Nam June Paik*, Guggenheim Museum, New York (2000); *Nam June Paik Retrospective: Videotime, Videospace*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea (1992); *Video Time-Video Space*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland Joint exhibit with Zürich Kunsthaus, Zürich, Switzerland (1991); *Retrospective*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York (1982); *Nam June Paik: Projects*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York, (1977); and *Nam June Paik: Werke 1946-1976: Musik-Fluxus-Video* (Retrospective), Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany (1976).

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Groups exhibitions include *Vertigo*, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Bologna, Italy (2007), *Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007); *Centre Pompidou Video Art—1965-2005*, Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney, Australia (2006); *Sons & Lumières: Une histoire du son dans l'art du XXe siècle*, Centre Pompidou-Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, France (2004); *World Wide Video Festival*, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2004); *Temporal Values. Von Minimal zu Video*, ZKM|Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany (2003); *X-Screen*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria (2003); *Fluxus in Düsseldorf 1962/63*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany (2003); and the 45th Biennale di Venezia: German Pavilion, Venice, Italy (1993).

Gary Hill (born in Santa Monica, California, 1951) lives and works in Seattle, Washington. Gary Hill began his career as a sculptor, but has worked with sound and video since the early 1970s, producing single-channel video works and mixed media installations. Solo exhibitions include those at the Fondation Cartier and the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, in Paris France; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California; the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, New York; Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel, Switzerland; and Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona, and *Gary Hill: Projecting Rome*, projected installations at the Coliseum and various venues in Rome, Italy. He is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations, and received the Leone d'Oro Prize for Sculpture at the 1995 Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy. He was awarded a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grant in 1998.

The Media Test Wall, an ongoing series of contemporary video exhibitions, is located in the Whitaker Building (21 Ames St., Building 56) on the MIT campus.

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