

CONTEMPORARY ART FROM THE COLLECTION EXAMINES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND CURRENT EVENTS FROM THE LATE 1960s TO THE PRESENT

Exhibition Features Prominent Installations by Paul Chan, General Idea, Yoko Ono, Pino Pascali, and Kara Walker, Among Others

Contemporary Art from the Collection

June 30, 2010—September 19, 2011

Contemporary Galleries, second floor

NEW YORK, June 29, 2010—*Contemporary Art from the Collection*, a complete reinstallation of The Museum of Modern Art's 14,740-square-foot galleries for contemporary art, offers a focused examination of artistic practice since the late 1960s and how current events from the last 40 years have shaped artists' work. On view from June 30, 2010, to September 12, 2011, the installation presents approximately 130 works by over 60 artists, including Lynda Benglis, Daniel Buren, Paul Chan, General Idea, the Guerrilla Girls, David Hammons, Yoko Ono, and Kara Walker. *Contemporary Art from the Collection* is the most recent installation of these galleries, which are regularly reconfigured and reinstalled to display the Museum's vast collection and to allow visitors to explore the art of today. Many of the works are on view for the first time since their acquisition, including works by Hammons, Kalup Linzy, Pino Pascali, and Robert Rauschenberg, among others. *Contemporary Art from the Collection* is organized by Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director, and Christophe Cherix, Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art.

As part of the exhibition, several projects are on view throughout other parts of the Museum, including the Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium, The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, and Cafe 2, where a series of performances will take place beginning in January 2011. Kara Walker's 50-foot-long wall installation *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred b'tween the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart* (1994) is on view in the Marron Atrium through November 29, 2010. First exhibited in her 1994 New York debut, the piece inaugurated the artist's signature medium: meticulous black cutout silhouettes of caricatured antebellum figures arranged on a white wall in uncanny, sexualized, and often violent scenarios. In the work's elaborate title, "Gone" refers to Margaret Mitchell's 1936 best-selling melodramatic novel *Gone with the Wind*, set during the American Civil War. While Walker's narrative begins and ends with coupled figures, the work's tragicomic chain of turbulent imagery refutes the promise of romance and confounds straightforward definitions of power.

Across from Walker's installation in the Marron Atrium, Yoko Ono's *Voice Piece for Soprano* (1961/2010) is also on view through November 29, 2010. A microphone stands near a set of

instructions silkscreened onto the atrium wall: "Scream: against the wind, against the wall, against the sky." Throughout the run of the installation, MoMA visitors are invited to follow the instructions, and, in addressing both the public and the institution, become participants in the work. Additional interventions by Ono are also on view, including *Wish Tree* (1996/2010), installed within the Sculpture Garden. For this piece, visitors are provided with a pen and paper; after writing a "wish," they then attach the paper tag to the tree. The "wish tags" are removed from the tree intermittently and collected all together in a large box displayed within the second-floor galleries.

Within the exhibition galleries, works follow a chronological path, with pieces by Robert Rauschenberg, George Maciunas, Pino Pascali, Adrian Piper, and Gordon Matta-Clark, among others, on view in the exhibition's opening galleries. On view for the first time at MoMA, Rauschenberg's *Currents* (1970) is a 60-foot-long screenprint composed of press clippings from that time period. A Maciunas work—drawn from the Museum's recent acquisition of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection—features hundreds of empty containers from products that Maciunas consumed during one year, systematically stacked in tall columns and displayed against the wall. Two notable pieces from Pascali are on view: *Machine Gun* (1966) and *Bridge* (1968). *Machine Gun* is composed of reworked automobile parts from a Fiat 500 shaped into a free-standing machine gun; *Bridge*, a 26-foot-long sculptural installation composed of steel wool braided by the artist, is on view for the first time at the Museum.

Also drawn from the Museum's Fluxus Collection, a series of screenprinted canvases from Alison Knowles's *The Identical Lunch* (1969) show the artist's friends and colleagues each eating the same lunch of a tuna fish sandwich. In conjunction with this presentation, Knowles will perform this work in the Museum's Cafe 2, beginning in January 2011. The artist will serve MoMA visitors "the identical lunch" twice a week at an assigned table within the restaurant. Starting January 3, 2011, MoMA visitors can sign up at moma.org/contemporarygalleries for one of the scheduled seatings.

One gallery is devoted to Paul Sharits's *Ray Gun Virus* (1966). Sharits, a key figure in a group of structural filmmakers that emerged in the 1960s, rejected conventional cinematic techniques of illusionism and narrative. In creating *Ray Gun Virus*, Sharits filmed monochrome sheets of colored paper and edited the footage into precisely syncopated visual rhythms, creating an oscillating effect that produces a range of optical phenomena in the spectator's vision.

A section of the exhibition focuses on the late 1960s and early 1970s and the role of painting and sculpture at that time, including works by Daniel Buren, Simon Hantaï, Agnes Martin, Marisa Merz, Keith Sonnier, and a sculpture by Jackie Winsor. While some artists, such as Mel Bochner, rejected painting and the sculptural object outright, calling for a "dematerialization" of the art object altogether, Sonnier and Merz collapsed the distinctions between painting and sculpture, employing commercial or industrial materials to tie their work more closely to the life of the street. With a similar skepticism, Hantaï responded to Abstract Expressionism by

reinterpreting its processes using a technique in which he crumpled a canvas into a large bunch, painted the exposed areas, then stretched it to reveal large abstractions. In *Untitled (Suite "Blancs")* (1973), Hantai also engages both sides of the canvas, using the back of an earlier oil painting as his support; faint color patches from the original work are visible within the colorful pattern, fulfilling the artist's desire to "draw out the qualities of the reverse." Buren similarly found a way around the artist's traditional, heroic confrontation with the blank canvas, choosing readymade fabrics as his supports and developing rigorous conceptual systems to guide his practice. On view are Buren's *White Acrylic Painting on White and Anthracite Gray Striped Cloth* (1966) and *Black and white striped cloth. External white bands covered over with white paint, recto-verso* (1970).

The following section of the exhibition is dedicated to the 1980s, a time in which many artists adopted strategies of reproduction, repetition, and appropriation, building on Andy Warhol's self-proclaimed desire to be "a machine." This generation came of age as digital technology entered the marketplace, and with computers dramatically increasing both access to information and the amount of information available, artists began to question the necessity of inventing new imagery. Instead, they began to adapt or recontextualize existing material, drawing equally from popular sources and art history. On view is Sherrie Levine's *Untitled (Mr. Austridge: 2)* (1989), one of a series of paintings which are identical except for the grain of the wood support. Lifted from the popular *Krazy Kat* cartoons of the 1920s, the ostrich character at the center of the work avoids the challenges of the world around it by burying its head in a can. Drawn by George Herriman, who was born to a Creole African-American family but whose death certificate identified him as Caucasian, the *Krazy Kat* comic strips depict a love triangle whose characters shift gender and ethnicity. By borrowing the language and techniques of mass media, Levine and other artists analyzed and exposed previously hidden relationships among the production, presentation, and commodification of art. With a lacerating irony, they also examined the ways in which the mass media and art shape collective and individual identities.

The irony that replaced faith in the formulas of the past for many artists of this generation betrays the melancholy of a period in which the AIDS crisis continued, hitting the arts community with particular ferocity. General Idea's *AIDS (Wallpaper)* (1988), which replaces Robert Indiana's iconic "LOVE" slogan with the repetition of the word "AIDS," is on view. Several works in this section address other social, political, or cultural concerns, including a selection of posters by the artist collective Guerrilla Girls that question the role of women in museums and the art world; David Hammons's *African-American Flag* (1990), which replaces the colors of the American flag with red, black, and green, the colors of the Pan-African flag; and Bruce Nauman's sexually and violently explicit large-scale drawing *Punch and Judy II Birth & Life & Sex & Death* (1985). Similarly, Felix Gonzales-Torres confronted the personal and political dimensions of the crisis, with *Untitled (Supreme Majority)* (1991). In Gonzales-Torres's installation seven paper cones are arranged on the floor, appearing simultaneously fragile and piercing. The work's title recalls both

the Supreme Court's 1986 decision to uphold the criminalization of homosexuality and the political potency of the rising Moral Majority.

In an adjoining gallery Glenn Ligon's 23-minute video *The Death of Tom* (2008) plays in a continuous loop. For this project, Ligon had initially intended to create a reconstruction of the last scene of a 1903 silent film adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. After Ligon's film was processed, he discovered that the film was blurred and that his original imagery had disappeared. Recognizing an affinity between this spectral film footage and his earlier non-video work dealing with legibility, Ligon left the footage unedited and added a commissioned score played by the jazz pianist Jason Moran, based on the vaudeville song "Nobody."

The works in the final section, most produced within the last decade, hint at a willful mistranslation of earlier forms of painting and object-making and a critique of artistic practice itself; an ambivalent relationship to any sense of classical order pervades. On view in this section is Huang Yong Ping's *Long Scroll* (2001), a 50-foot-long scroll of which 12 feet will be viewable at any one time. A Chinese expatriate who resides in France, Huang uses sources drawn from Western and Chinese art history in order to reveal the polyvalent nature of global modernity. This particular work takes the form of a traditional Chinese scroll and is executed in a style that reveals Huang's classical training. A kind of self-portrait, the work is a nonhierarchical visual compendium of the artist's career and wide-ranging influences, including Marcel Duchamp. Also on view is Lucy McKenzie's untitled painting from 2002, which combines references as diverse as the traditions of socialist mural painting, the Braun appliance logo, bawdy graffiti, and the history of feminist labor. In this vein, painters such as Sergej Jensen take modern painting as both model and myth; Jensen's torqued hemp canvas, *Untitled* (2008), is an ironic rethinking of the exacting geometric compositions of midcentury modern painters. Gedi Sibony's sculpture of collapsed vertical blinds, *The Middle of the World* (2008), suggests the challenges of vision, both literally and metaphorically.

The exhibition concludes with an assembled archive by Paul Chan, related to his restaging of Samuel Beckett's 1948–49 play *Waiting for Godot* on the streets of New Orleans shortly after Hurricane Katrina. In assembling an archive rather than producing art objects, Chan stresses the collaborative community-oriented process involved in the project, and shows how, in the face of social, political, and environmental collapse, there might be an antidote to the alienation of contemporary life in such collaborations.

SPONSORSHIP:

Contemporary Art from the Collection, one of a series highlighting the Museum's contemporary collection, is made possible by BNY Mellon.

RELATED PERFORMANCE:***Performance 10: The Identical Lunch by Alison Knowles***

Thursday, January 13—Friday, February 4, 2011

Cafe 2, The Museum of Modern Art

Drawn from the Museum's Fluxus Collection, a series of screenprinted canvases from Alison Knowles's *The Identical Lunch* (1969) is on display in the exhibition *Contemporary Art from the Collection*, which show the artist's friends and colleagues each eating the same lunch of a tuna fish sandwich. In conjunction with the gallery presentation, Knowles will perform this work in the Museum's Cafe 2, beginning in January 2011. The artist will serve MoMA visitors "the identical lunch" twice a week at an assigned table within the restaurant. MoMA visitors can sign up for one of the scheduled seatings starting January 3, 2011, at moma.org/contemporarygalleries.

The performance is organized by Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director, The Museum of Modern Art, and Christophe Cherix, Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art.

The Performance Exhibition Series is made possible by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation.

FILM EXHIBITIONS:

A series of film and video exhibitions drawn from MoMA's collection will be screened in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters throughout the course of the year to accompany the exhibition *Contemporary Art from the Collection*. The series will run from October 15, 2010, through June 2011, with the complete screening schedule available via MoMA.org. ***Contemporary Films and Videos from the Collection*** is organized by Joshua Siegel, Associate Curator, Department of Film, except where noted.

Contemporary Films and Videos from the Collection**Drama Queens: The Soap Opera in Experimental Cinema**

An exploration of the ways in which filmmakers have reinvented, deconstructed, and parodied the Hollywood melodrama. Artists include Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Hollis Frampton, George Kuchar, Kalup Linzy, Tony Oursler, Yvonne Rainer, Andy Warhol, and John Waters. Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) and its two brilliant and provocative remakes, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Angst essen Seele Auf (Ali: Fear Eats the Soul)* (1974) and Todd Haynes's *Far from Heaven* (2002), form the cornerstone of the exhibition.

Queer Cinema in the Collection: Today and Yesterday

An archival exhibition of Queer Cinema and AIDS-related films and videos, juxtaposing the 1980s and today. Co-organized by AA Bronson, an artist, writer, curator, and member of the artists' group General Idea, the exhibition will feature key works by Su Friedrich, General Idea, Tom Kalin, Marlon Riggs, Warren Sonbert, and others, along with more recent gay-themed work by Kalup Linzy and others.

Film restorations and artist presentations

As a special sidebar to this year's edition of *To Save and Project: The Eighth MoMA International Festival of Film Preservation* (October 15–November 7, 2010), several artists included in the contemporary gallery reinstatement have been invited to choose and introduce preserved or restored films, including Lynda Benglis, Rachel Harrison, and Glenn Ligon. Also featured is the New York premiere of MoMA's new preservation of *Mangue-Bangue* (1970), a seminal but long-censored experimental film by the Brazilian avant-garde artist Neville D'Almeida (based on an idea by D'Almeida and Hélio Oiticica). Organized by Joshua Siegel, Associate Curator, Anne Morra, Associate Curator, and Katie Trainor, Film Collections Manager, Department of Film.

During the course of the year, the Museum will also premiere its new restorations of the films of **Stuart Sherman** (1945–2001), an influential performance artist perhaps best known for his tabletop “Spectacles,” and **Agnès Martin’s** only film, *Gabriel* (1978), which offers a fresh reconsideration of the painter’s work.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Paul Chan: *Waiting for Godot* in New Orleans

Wednesday, June 30, 6:30 p.m., The Celeste Bartos Theater

In November 2007 in New Orleans, artist Paul Chan worked with New York’s Classical Theatre of Harlem and the public arts group Creative Time to present five free site-specific performances of Samuel Beckett’s play *Waiting for Godot*, staged in two neighborhoods destroyed by the flooding of Hurricane Katrina. But the project involved much more than the play. In this program, **Paul Chan**, whose work will be on view in MoMA’s new installation of contemporary art, and some of his key collaborators discuss the project and all the different components that made it possible. Participants include **Robert Lynn Green**, New Orleans resident and “neighborhood ambassador” for the Godot project; **Greta Gladney**, Executive Director of The Renaissance Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in New Orleans; and **Christopher McElroen**, Co-founder of the Classical Theatre of Harlem. The program is moderated by **Kathy Halbreich**, Associate Director, MoMA.

Yoko Ono and Kara Walker in Conversation

Tuesday, March 8, 2011, 6:30 p.m., Titus Theater 1

Artists Yoko Ono and Kara Walker, whose work is represented in *Contemporary Art from the Collection*, will engage in a dialogue about their respective practices and share their perspectives on how social, political, and gender issues inform their work. The program is moderated by MoMA director Glenn D. Lowry.

Tickets (\$10; members \$8; students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$5) can be purchased at the lobby information desk, the film desk, or online at moma.org/thinkmodern.

Instruction Lab

Spring 2011

Dispersed throughout the Museum, Instruction Lab is a series of workshops, ambulatory activities, and performances that offer the public the chance to witness, reconstruct, and participate in instruction-based pieces from the recent history of art, as well as works by Fluxus artists such as George Brecht and Yoko Ono. Many of the workshops and activities, while absurdist in nature, illustrate the spirit of this art movement and the artists that followed it.

AUDIO GUIDE:

The accompanying audio guide features original interviews and commentaries by a wide selection of artists within the exhibition, including: Kara Walker, Gedi Sibony, Huma Bhaba, AA Bronson, Lynda Benglis, Paul Chan, and Rivane Neuenschwander. The audio guide is supplemented by original audio pieces produced by Paul Chan in April 2009 as part of the archive for his project *Waiting for Godot*, which is on view within the exhibition. MoMA Audio is also available for download on MoMA.org, on www.moma.org/wifi and as a podcast on iTunes. MoMA Audio is available free of charge courtesy of Bloomberg.

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For downloadable high-resolution images, register at www.moma.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)