Broadcasting: EAI at ICA brings together an intergenerational group of artists whose time-based artworks were produced in concert with their means of circulation, from the democratic platform of public access television to the instantaneity of social media. Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is one of the first nonprofit organizations dedicated to the advocacy for and development of video as an art form, providing a crucial space of production and distribution. Drawing on EAI’s extraordinary archive, and building upon ICA’s history of engagement with media art, Broadcasting fosters a dialogue between early innovators and contemporary practitioners through an installation, screenings, and series of live events. Featuring works by artists including Robert Beck, Dara Birnbaum, Tony Cokes, Ulysses Jenkins, JODI, Shigeko Kubota, Kristin Lucas, Shana Moulton, Trevor Shimizu, and TVTV, the exhibition will focus on how artists exploit the act of broadcast as a subject, as a means of intervention, and as a form of participation across a variety of displays. The temporal nature of broadcast television is emphasized within the gallery, which doubles as an event space for public discussions to be transmitted online and via cable access during the run of the exhibition.

The word “broadcast” originated as an agricultural term meaning to disperse seeds widely, but became a figurative description for communications technology in the radio age. In the television era, with which broadcasting is most synonymous, the introduction of personal video equipment fostered a more dynamic interpretation, facilitating a two-way flow of information that resonates with contemporary participatory media. In this spirit, the physical walls of the gallery will extend beyond ICA through a series of collaborations with Lightbox Film Center, PhillyCAM, Scribe Video Center, and Slought. A catalogue for Broadcasting: EAI at ICA will be produced following the conclusion of the exhibition.

— Alex Klein, Dorothy & Stephen R. Weber (CHE’60) Curator, ICA and Rebecca Cleman, Director of Distribution, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)
Robert Beck, who changed his father’s name by a single vowel as an act of art, currently works under the name Robert Buck. Beck / Buck is most known for his paintings, drawings, sculptures, and installations, and for his precise use of materials—yet film and television have profoundly influenced Buck’s career and self-representation. For decades Beck held different administrative roles at EAI, including as Technical Director and Chief Editor. In the context of EAI, Beck’s artistic career can be seen to parallel, by chance, the rise of home video and the increasing popularity of reality television and the found-footage genre.

At the start of this career is Beck’s conceptual cable-access series, *The Space Program* (1985–86). Broadcast regularly on Manhattan Cable Television for the better part of a year, Beck undertook each half-hour episode as a conceptual performance, using duration, the context of television, and video technology as expressive tools. The abrupt juxtaposition of private and public space, and of personal and impersonal video footage, is starkly conveyed in the *STOP* (1985) episode. The artist, bare-chested, is seen in a black-and-white closed-circuit feed, gazing at a street scene the viewer is granted via a live color video feed. The dislocation of time, self, and physical space is represented in a minimal composition, cutting the two video feeds together in a single combined scene.

In the *Mirror* (1985) episode, the grainy static of a lost broadcast signal appears to be slowly scratched away by the artist to reveal a fragmented view of his face, mirrored in a closed-circuit feed. At the conclusion of this graphic intervention, Beck taps on the screen, calling attention to the physical and conceptual membrane between himself and his viewers. *The Space Program* series was likely encountered by accident, with no context other than the haphazard surrounding television programs, emphasizing art’s capacity to unsettle the known and open up a path into the unknown.
Dara Birnbaum’s provocative video works are among the most influential and innovative contributions to the contemporary discourse on art and television. In her videotapes and multimedia installations, Birnbaum applies both low-end and high-end video technology to subvert, critique or deconstruct the power of mass media images and gestures to define mythologies of culture, history and memory. Through a dynamic televisual language of images, music and text, she exposes the media’s embedded ideological meanings and posits video as a means of giving voice to the individual. Birnbaum has stated that she wanted to “define the language of video art in relation to the institution of television.” In her radical media critiques of the late 1970s, including the seminal Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman (1978–79), she used rigorous tactics of deconstruction and appropriation to dismantle television’s codes of representation.

Among the first artists to apply these strategies to subvert the language of television texts, she turned its vocabulary back on itself in a powerful critique.

MTV: Artbreak (1987), commissioned by MTV Networks, aired as a dynamic “thirty-second spot” that provided a condensed history of animation highlighting the representation of women, from the cell imagery of Max Fleischer’s Out of the Inkwell series to the contemporary digital effects of television. In Birnbaum’s vision, Fleischer’s spilled inkwell releases cartoon bubbles containing images of women from MTV music videos. Birnbaum reverses the traditional gender roles of the producer and product of commercial imagery: the final image is that of a female artist on whose video “palette” we see a glimpse of Fleischer.
In his videos and installations produced since the mid–1980s, and his work with the collective X-PRZ, Tony Cokes engages in cogent investigations of identity and opposition. His works question the construction of subjectivities (personal, cultural and historical), and how race, gender and class are perceived through what he terms the “representational regimes of image and sound,” as perpetuated by Hollywood, the media and popular culture. By reframing and repositioning appropriated text, archival footage, and audio, Cokes brings renewed attention to often forgotten information and its relevance for our contemporary moment.

The ongoing Evil series, begun in 2003, focuses on a critique of the ideological forces driving American politics and the corrosive inner-workings of capitalism. In Evil.6: Making the Case / Faking the Books (2006) an edited transcript from George W. Bush’s 2003 televised State of the Union Address, in which he outlined the case for the invasion of Iraq, scrolls along the screen like a news ticker. The footage, edited by artist Benj Gerdes to isolate only the pauses between Bush’s sentences, is juxtaposed with the enthusiastic clapping of Congress and a soundtrack by the Munich electropop band Lali Puna.

The tension between how we privilege visibility versus audibility is further explored in Evil.27: Selma (2011) where a text by the collective Our Literal Speed about the audio documentation of the Civil Rights Movement is set to songs by The Smiths. Cokes writes, “I wanted to embrace the text’s call to rethink social movements in tandem with shifts in media forms (the movement from radio to television) as potentially reflecting a change in conditions of possibility or imaginative horizons for political action.” Similarly, Evil.35: Carlin / Owners (George Carlin Speaks) (2012), juxtaposes music by the postpunk band Gang of Four with a monologue found on YouTube by the comedian and social critic George Carlin. Set against the band’s staccato rhythms, Carlin’s sharp critique eludes nostalgic reference and highlights unresolved aspects of technology and syntax.

TONY COKES
(b. 1956, Richmond, VA; lives Providence, RI)

Evil.6: Making The Case / Faking The Books, 2006, digital video, color, sound, 10 minutes
Evil.27: Selma, 2011 / 2017 refix, digital video, color, sound, 9 minutes
Evil.35: Carlin / Owners (George Carlin Speaks), 2012 / 2017 refix, digital video, color, sound, 8 minutes
Throughout his career Ulysses Jenkins has consistently interrogated questions of race and gender as they relate to ritual, history, and the power of the state. From his work with Video Venice News, a Los Angeles media collective he founded in the early 1970s, to his involvement with the artist group Studio Z (alongside figures such as David Hammons, Senga Nengudi, and Maren Hassinger), to his individual video and performance works, Jenkins explicitly comments on the racism embedded in popular culture and its effects on subjectivity. As he observes in his landmark video, *Mass of Images* (1978), “You are just a mass of images you’ve gotten to know from years and years of TV shows.”

This challenge to mainstream media takes a more expressive and performative turn in his video, *Inconsequential Doggereal* (1981). A play on the word “doggerel,” Jenkins’s “doggereal” suggests that time and reality is more disjunctive and absurd than we like to believe. In the video we see the artist naked and vulnerable interspersed with characters who perform gendered stereotypes. With its fast cuts and appropriated footage, it takes inspiration from Surrealist and Dada filmmaking and the then-nascent music video culture of MTV.

Influenced by Kit Galloway’s and Sherrie Rabinowitz’s *Hole-In-Space* (1980) and his involvement with their Electronic Cafe, Jenkins became increasingly interested in the communicative potential of video technology. As a result, while he was living in Northern California in the early 1990s he embarked on a series of video phone performances and workshops. Notable among them is his ambitious *Bay Windows* (1991), which centered around broadcasting the ecological infractions and societal oppressions faced by indigenous communities, often in remote locations. Staged in 1990 at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, Jenkins connected the local audience to groups channeled through various locations including the Nunavut Territory, Baker Lake, Canada and The Western Front in Vancouver, Canada.
JODI (Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans) formed in the mid-1990s, coinciding with the rise of the internet as a primary social and cultural platform. Extending from their training in photography and video art, JODI were among the first artists to subvert the conventions of computer-based interactions through avant-garde strategies. Their website projects, gaming installations, and software-based works intentionally destabilize the passive consumerist relationship between digital technology and its users.

*My Desktop* was originally presented as a large four-channel installation in JODI’s first “real life” exhibition, INSTALL.EXE, hosted in 2002 by [plug.in] Basel and Eyebeam, New York City. The work is a choreographed screen capture of JODI’s private desktop, cluttered with folders and apps that are intended to facilitate organization and order, here creating a chaotic maelstrom of noises and animations. This intentional misuse of operating software could be likened to Nam June Paik’s playful manipulations of the images on a cathode-ray tube television set with a magnet. The functionality of the purpose-built icons on JODI’s desktop are hijacked and deployed by them to create an abstraction of sound and image that foregrounds the apparatus, a strategy that media historian Alexander Galloway has likened to that of the filmmaker Jean Luc Godard, conjuring an “aesthetic of malfunction.” *My Desktop* (2007) refers to the illusion of individuality nurtured by consumer products, when in fact these products herd individuals to engage with them in predetermined ways. JODI’s intervention constitutes a rejection of this determination, reclaiming their co-opted desktop as a site of abstract expression, while broadcasting this personal workspace via exhibition to a public.
Shigeko Kubota brought a singular sensibility to her extensive body of video sculptures, multi-media installations, and single-channel videos. Over her five-decade career, Kubota forged a lyrical confluence of the personal and the technological, often merging vibrant electronic processing techniques with images and objects of nature, art and everyday life, including her relationship with her late husband, artist Nam June Paik. An active participant in the international Fluxus art movement in the 1960s, Kubota was strongly influenced by the art and theories of Marcel Duchamp and John Cage.

In Kubota’s *Video Girls and Video Songs for Navajo Sky* (1973), the artist narrates a surrealist video diary of her month-long sojourn with a Navajo family on a reservation in Chinle, Arizona. At the outset of the video, Kubota’s face is superimposed over the black-and-white footage in shocking blue as if to underscore that this is not an ethnographic documentation of Kubota’s new friends as they go about their everyday rituals, but should instead be understood as a record of a subjective experience. The limited capacity of video to bridge cultural differences is underscored by Kubota’s awareness that this video footage would be seen in a New York City arts context.

This connection between the technological interface and the self is further explored in the deeply intimate statement of grief, *My Father* (1973–75). Upon learning of her father’s death, Kubota commemorates the last time they were together in Japan watching television, by staging a display of mourning in which she weeps alone in front of a television monitor. As she touches and caresses the screen it is as if she might conjure her deceased father over the airwaves.
Kristin Lucas’s work in video, installation, and participatory media has, since the emergence of the internet, focused on now pervasive themes of alienation and technological conditioning. Works such as *Cable Xcess* (1996) call attention to the dislocation of self within encompassing social structures and systems, ranging from social media to corporate and alternative communities. Lucas disrupts the stealth insinuation of technology into daily life, and demystifies technology tools with the aim of encouraging individuals to recognize their own agency. Anticipating the rise of domestic stars on YouTube and social media, Lucas transforms herself into a public figure capable of instigating action in her audience.

As Lucas describes in the EAI Catalogue, *Cable Xcess* is “a public service announcement / infomercial which informs viewers about the consequences of long term exposure to electromagnetic fields. I perform as both spokesperson and case study, transmitting a pirate broadcast through my body (body as satellite), educating viewers about early signs of exposure, and sharing alternative methods for coping with contamination. At a midpoint in the video my perspective on the situation changes and I speak instead as an advocate in the form of a testimonial about how exposure to these fields has led me to become super-powered.”
Shana Moulton creates evocatively oblique narratives in her video and performance works. Combining an unsettling, wry humor with a low-tech, pop sensibility, in her videos Moulton often plays a character whose interactions with the everyday world are both mundane and surreal, in a domestic sphere just slightly askew. As her protagonist navigates the enigmatic and possibly magical properties of her home decor, Moulton initiates relationships with objects and consumer products that are at once banal and uncanny.

The Whispering Pines series takes inspiration from the surrealist images of René Magritte, the uncanny world of David Lynch’s Twin Peaks, and the grotesqueries of commodity culture as it relates to gender. In Whispering Pines 7 (2006), Moulton’s character Cynthia is confronted with a distorted mirror image that renders the familiar extremely strange. While Cynthia performs her nose-pore cleaning routine in front of the mirror, a sphinx appears and sings a song from the animated movie “The Last Unicorn,” which laments becoming a woman.
Trevor Shimizu has produced a large body of paintings that are crudely
gestural and sparse, and subtle in their compositional aesthetics
if not in their subject matter. In works that are semi-autobiographical,
humiliating social incidents and aberrations usually kept private are
made public. Alongside his painting practice, Shimizu has produced
a body of video art that emphasizes how his personal and public iden-
tity has been shaped by home video and the banality of television
and media consumerism. As a former Technical Director of Electronic
Arts Intermix, he developed close friendships and collaborations
with artists including Dan Graham, Carolee Schneemann, Shigeko
Kubota, and Dara Birnbaum. The influence of other EAI artists, especially
the droll, self-deprecating humor of Michael Smith, and Mike Kelley’s
unflinching portrayals of American culture, are also clearly evident.
Self-representation is a theme across Shimizu’s art, and his paintings
and videos often incorporate the artist as a surrogate who is elusively
aligned with Shimizu. In the three videos that comprise his Lonely
Loser Trilogy (2000), the artist records extended browsing sessions
online, each one featuring a high-energy, macho sport that under-
scores Shimizu’s pathetic living room spectatorship. Skate Videos
(2013) was recorded with a pair of Google Glasses, further emphasizing
the house-bound loser’s dependency on gear to compensate for
inaction. The domestication of skate videos that in youth might have
represented teenage rebellion conjures a poignant portrait of the
artist as an adult.
TRANS-VOICES, 1992
This selection of 60–second shorts was originally produced in 1992 as part of Trans-Voices, a collaboration between the American Center, Paris, with the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Public Art Fund. Conceived as a multimedia public art project for the conclusion of the 20th century, Trans-Voices invited over fifty artists to make works for radio, television, and subway platforms in Paris and New York. Now, twenty-five years later these politically-charged interventions—which address issues ranging from xenophobia and consumerism to identity and postcolonial geographies—are still relevant in our contemporary moment.

BETH B
(b. 1955, New York, NY; lives New York, NY)
Trans-Voices: Amnesia
Among her accomplishments, Beth B was a co-founder of the artist’s group Colab (Collaborative Projects Inc.), and organizer of the video program of the landmark Times Square Show in 1980. In Amnesia she offers a chilling cautionary tale and a stark, uncompromising portrayal of the escalation of xenophobic sentiment in the neo-conservative climate of both France and the U.S.

DARA BIRNBAUM
(b. 1946, New York, NY; lives New York, NY)
Trans-Voices: Transgressions
Birnbaum swiftly traces the geopolitical history of the U.S. and then France, charting their constant reconfigurations across maps rendered malleable through special effects. A densely layered soundtrack guides the viewer through this “anti-terrain,” in which boundaries are arbitrary and national identities unstable.

PHILIP MALLORY JONES
(b. 1947, Chicago, IL; lives Atlanta, Georgia)
Trans-Voices: Paradigm Shift
In his work Jones explores the emerging global African diaspora culture and consciousness through nonverbal storytelling and an evocative, transcultural language of sound and image construction. Paradigm Shift presents a poetic meditation on the cultures of the African diaspora in a richly visualized collage of sounds and images derived from African cosmology, tracing the long historical struggle to define a trans-cultural African race.

TOM KALIN
(b. 1962, Chicago, IL; lives New York, NY)
Trans-Voices: Nation
Tom Kalin began his career as a founding member of the AIDS activist collective Gran Fury. In this highly stylized and deftly edited provocation a cast of performers, diverse in national origin, recite a litany of statements meant to challenge viewers’ secure notions of national identity. Here, Kalin asserts that bodies are very real battlegrounds, territories that are contested and controlled by the same political forces that determine borders or set national policies.
VICTOR MASAYESVA, JR.
(b. 1951, Hotevilla, Arizona; lives Hotevilla, Arizona)
Trans-Voices: Two Faces of One Room
Victor Masayesva, Jr. has created a rich body of video and photographic work that represents the culture and traditions of Native Americans—particularly the Hopi of Southwest Arizona—through poetic visualizations. He employs computer animation and graphics in lyrical translations of Hopi myths, rituals and history as a way to articulate the richness of his heritage in his own language. In Two Faces of One Room two sacred architectural structures of two dissimilar cultures—the kiva of the Native American and the cathedral of Western Europe—are juxtaposed to contemplate their cultural and spiritual differences.

NAM JUNE PAIK
(b. 1932, Seoul, South Korea; d. 2006, Miami, FL)
PAUL GARRIN
(b. 1957, Philadelphia, PA; lives New York, NY)
Trans-Voices: A Tale of Two Cities
Television on speed, Nam June Paik’s A Tale of Two Cities is a potpourri of pop personalities, avant-garde antics and international cultural kitsch, where past, present and future collide in the kaleidoscopic, hyper-kinetic, televisually “now.”

BRUCE YONEMOTO
(b. 1949, San Jose, CA; lives Los Angeles, CA)
NORMAN YONEMOTO
(b. 1946, Chicago, IL; d. 2014, Los Angeles, CA)
Trans-Voices: ahistory
Since the mid-1970s the California-based artists and brothers, Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, produced a body of collaborative videos that deconstruct and rewrite the cultural mythologies embedded in mass media. In ahistory, they depict Europe’s enchantment with American consumer culture, as well-known European architectural landmarks—the Eiffel Tower, the Acropolis, London Bridge—are reflected in the glossy surface of a 1960’s Cadillac convertible, the ultimate symbol of the “golden age” of American consumerism.
Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is a nonprofit arts organization that fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution, and preservation of moving image art. A New York-based international resource for media art and artists, EAI holds a major collection of over 3,700 new and historical media artworks, from groundbreaking early video by pioneering figures of the 1960s to new digital projects by today’s emerging artists. EAI works closely with artists, museums, schools and other venues worldwide to preserve and provide access to this significant archive. EAI services also include viewing access, educational initiatives, extensive online resources, technical facilities, and public programs such as artists’ talks, screenings, and multi-media performances. EAI’s Online Catalogue is a comprehensive resource on the artists and works in the EAI collection, and features expansive materials on media art’s histories and current practices.

Some descriptions in this booklet have been adapted from the EAI Catalogue.
FEB 17–MAR 25, 2018

Broadcasting: Guerrilla Media
Slought, 4017 Walnut St, Philadelphia

An extension of the exhibition exploring activist strategies undertaken by media collectives such as TVTV, Video Venice News, Squat Theatre, and Paper Tiger TV is simultaneously on view at Slought.

LOCAL PARTNERS

Lightbox Film Center
ihousephilly.org/arts

Lightbox Film Center is Philadelphia’s premier exhibitor of film and moving image art. As the signature arts program of International House Philadelphia, an independent nonprofit organization, Lightbox presents an unparalleled slate of repertory, nonfiction, experimental and international cinema. Beyond the traditional movie theater experience, Lightbox delivers enriching film programs accompanied by artist talks, live music and other multidisciplinary events year-round in a dedicated venue known as a gathering place for cinephiles.

Scribe Video Center
scribe.org

SCRIBE VIDEO CENTER, is a media arts organization located in Philadelphia, where independent artists, members of community groups and scholars can learn the craft of creating time-based visual-media. The programs at Scribe encourage the use of video as a means of creative expression, to analyze issues affecting diverse communities, and as a tool for progressive social change. “Scribe” is a metaphor for the use of digital recording technologies as a modern means to document significant contemporary concerns and events.

Slought
slought.org

Slought is a non-profit organization on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania that engages publics in dialogue about cultural and socio-political change in Philadelphia, the world, and the cloud. We are a new form of institution that builds relationships and social trust through collaboration and the exchange of ideas.
FEBRUARY  PHILADELPHIA

7  6:30 PM  Broadcasting: Means of Production
ICA Galleries

This conversation will focus on how media artists approach the production and distribution of their work, which requires access to technology tools ranging from consumer software and hardware to high-end commercial facilities and platforms. With artists Tony Cokes and Antoine Catala.*

28  7 PM  Broadcasting: Variety Show Special
Lightbox Film Center
International House Philadelphia
3701 Chestnut St,
Philadelphia

Extending the exhibition beyond the walls of the gallery, a screening at Lightbox will consider the legacy of television personality Ernie Kovacs (whose first appearances were on NBC’s Philadelphia affiliate) within a larger context of artists making work for or about broadcast, from performative interventions to critiques of representation within mass media.

MARCH

2  7 PM  Broadcasting: Alternative Television
PhillyCAM Studios
699 Ranstead St,
Philadelphia

Join us this awards season for a First Friday Live Culture event that revisits the satirical documentary *TVTV Looks at the Oscars* (1976) by the guerrilla television collective TVTV, featuring Lily Tomlin, among other Hollywood notables.*

18  12:30 PM  Community Visions Retrospective
Scribe Video Center,
3908 Lancaster Ave,
Philadelphia

Since 1990, Scribe Video Center has guided over 75 community and activist organizations through the production of short documentaries and neighborhood portraits. The work created by the program is a powerful way to document community concerns, celebrate cultural diversity, and comment on the human condition. *Community Visions* is a part of Scribe’s mission to explore, develop and advance the use of multimedia technology as artistic tools for social change.

21  6:30 PM  Broadcasting: Transmission
ICA Galleries

In our final conversation of the series we will consider various technologies of transmission not just as a mode of viewer-ship, but as a tool of communication. With artists Ulysses Jenkins and Sondra Perry.*

*Please note these events will be recorded live for broadcast*
On the Air: Artist Television

Organized in conjunction with the exhibition, this ongoing survey will showcase work created by artists explicitly for over-the-air broadcast on television on public television stations like WGBH in Boston, KQED in San Francisco, and WNET in New York. This program will unearth some of the best, most bizarre, and most entertaining works that artists have produced for television, from experiments with purchased airtime to unannounced broadcast interventions. Expect surprises, oddities, and the unclassifiable!

Ulysses Jenkins: Artist Talk and Screening

EAI is pleased to present an evening with Ulysses Jenkins, featuring rarely screened videos that demonstrate Jenkins’s singular work in video and communications technologies. Following the screening, Jenkins will be in conversation with EAI’s Director of Distribution, Rebecca Cleman.

Ulysses Jenkins

The fifth screening in the Other Uses film series features the work of Ulysses Jenkins, whose videos examine television’s power to shape current events and historical episodes. Ulysses Jenkins is an artist who has given particular consideration to the portrayal of Black men in America. This installment features documentary and performance videos Jenkins made from the 1970s to the present, beginning with the artist’s filming of the Watts Festival. Alternating between clarity and obscurity, the forms and content of television are redeployed to challenge the perceived neutrality of the televizual record. Organized by Lucas Matheson for EMPAC.

This exhibition is co-curated by ICA’s Dorothy & Stephen R. Weber (CHE’60) Curator Alex Klein and Rebecca Cleman, Director of Distribution, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI). Support for Broadcasting: EAI at ICA has been provided by The Sachs Program for Arts Innovation and The Keith L. and Katherine Sachs Program in Contemporary Art.