

Artists include Jordan Crandall; Sophie Calle; Jenny Marketou; Antenna; Julia Scher; Vito Acconci; Jim Campbell; Peter Campus; Bruce Nauman; Paul Kaiser and Shelley Eshkar; Subodh Gupta; Harun Farocki; Kristin Lucas; Tiffany Holmes; Kiki Seror; Steve Mann; Martha Rosler; Jill Magid; Rafael Lozano-Hemmer; Tim Hyde; Andy Warhol; Jonas Mekas; Muntadas.

Balance and Power: Performance and Surveillance in Video Art

Exhibition curated by Michael Rush

Organized by Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
October 22, 2005 through January 1, 2006

Balance and Power: Performance and Surveillance in Video Art is a particularly timely exhibition for a world preoccupied with security and fearful of international terrorism. Curated by Michael Rush for Krannert Art Museum, this exhibition examines both the early days of video art and current practices in an attempt to understand the complex relationship between voluntary acting for the camera and involuntary taping by a camera on the part of power systems that have an interest in the movement of citizens. The award-winning, New York-based design firm, Antenna, has created an innovative, sculptural environment for the exhibition.

Balance (an essential talent for the performer) and *Power* (the essential currency of surveillance) has particular relevance at this historical moment for an array of reasons which may, at first, seem dizzying in their opposition as well as their interconnectedness: “star” culture and large-scale identification with media stars; stalking; identity theft; cultural paranoia; lust for privacy; fears of intimacy; longing for community; decency taboos; cultural narcissism, and so forth. Many of these psycho-social phenomena are reflected in the current mega-success of Reality TV in which people voluntarily allow themselves to be taped both openly and surreptitiously. Surveillance becomes performance and vice versa. The equation is dramatically altered, however, when we realize that the city of London, for example, has more than 500,000 surveillance cameras.

Since the earliest days of video art in the mid-1960s, artists who practice surveillance and performance have addressed these issues. Vito Acconci made humorous performative videos (*Theme Song* and *Command Performance* in the 1970s) that were actually preceded by a somewhat eerie surveillance work, *Following Piece*, from 1969. Bruce Nauman performed for the camera in many tapes, including *Slow Angle Walk* and *Bouncing in the Corner No. 1*, both from 1968, in addition to his iconic *Performance Corridor*, also 1968, in which he filmed unsuspecting visitors in his claustrophobic installation.

To this day, performance and surveillance continue to be central to the work of many

video and multi-media artists.

The exhibition will comprise both large-scale installations, single channel tapes, and newly commissioned work. Artists include Jordan Crandall, who will premiere his new film, *Homefront*; Sophie Calle; Jenny Marketou; Antenna; Julia Scher; Vito Acconci; Jim Campbell; Peter Campus; Bruce Nauman; Paul Kaiser and Shelley Eshkar; Subodh Gupta; Harun Farocki; Kristin Lucas; Tiffany Holmes; Kiki Seror; Steve Mann; Martha Rosler; Jill Magid; Rafael Lozano-Hemmer; Tim Hyde; Andy Warhol; Jonas Mekas; Muntadas.

Balance and Power is guest curated for Krannert Art Museum by Michael Rush, a curator, writer, critic, and former director of the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art (2000-2004). Rush is the author of three books from Thames and Hudson, London: *Video Art*, 2004, the first major survey of the field in more than twenty years; *New Media in Art*, published in May, 2005, which is a fully revised version of his best-selling *New Media in Late 20th -Century Art*, 1999. He has been a regular contributor to *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *artnet* and several other publications. A former award-winning experimental theater and video artist, Rush's work has been seen throughout the US and Europe and is in the collections of museums and universities, including the Centre Pompidou and the Whitney Museum. He holds a doctorate from Harvard University.

Michael Rush

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