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New Installation of Recent Media Art Acquisitions Opens at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has opened a new gallery dedicated to examining the history and the latest developments in the art of the moving image. “Watch This! New Directions in the Art of the Moving Image” opens to the public Dec. 10. John G. Hanhardt, senior curator for media arts, selected the works in the installation. This permanent-collection gallery, located on the museum’s third floor, allows for the presentation of the full range of media art practices.

“For the past three years, the Smithsonian American Art Museum has been assembling a serious collection of video and time-based artwork under the leadership of John Hanhardt, who is one of the world’s leading experts in media arts,” said Elizabeth Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. “This newly installed media arts gallery extends the range of contemporary art that we offer to visitors.”

“Watch This!” features key artworks from the history of video art and a new generation of artists on the cutting edge of media arts. The nine artworks on display are: Cory Arcangel, *Video Painting* (2008); Jim Campbell, *Grand Central Station #2* (2009) and *Reconstruction #7* (2006); Peter Campus, *Three Transitions* (1973); Kota Ezawa, *LYAM 3D* (2008); Svetlana and Igor Kopystiansky, *Yellow Sound* (2005); Nam June Paik, *9/23/69: Experiments with David Atwood* (1969); Bill Viola, *Surrender* (2001); and Marina Zurkow, *Elixir II* (2009). The majority of the featured artworks are recent acquisitions, with five entering the museum’s collection in 2010. The works by Viola and Campbell’s *Reconstruction #7* are on loan.

“From Nam June Paik’s early, innovative experiments with video to Cory Arcangel’s reworking of Nintendo games and obsolete computer systems, ‘Watch This!’ takes stock of the cutting-edge tools and materials used by video artists during the past 50 years,” said Hanhardt.

Dedicating a permanent-collection gallery to time-based art is an important new aspect of the media arts initiative at the museum, which includes acquisitions, exhibitions, educational programs and archival research resources related to film, video and the media arts. In 2009, the museum

acquired the complete estate archive of visionary artist Paik. Hanhardt, the leading expert on Paik and his global influence, is organizing the archive and the museum's Nam June Paik Media Arts Center. Research into the archive will be the basis for a series of publications of Paik's writings, exhibitions, and a catalogue raisonné. "Nam June Paik: Art and Process," the first in a series of exhibitions, is scheduled to open December 2012.

The James F. Dicke Family Endowment generously supported "Watch This!"

About the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with approximately 42,000 artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. Its National Historic Landmark building is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Follow the museum on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, ArtBabble, iTunes and YouTube. Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Website: americanart.si.edu.

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