

MIT List Visual Arts Center
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[LIST PROJECTS]

Civil Disobedience

July 18 – October 29, 2017



COVER Patricia Silva, *Mass Swell* (still), 2016, single-channel video, sound, 14:07 min.
Courtesy the artist.

ABOVE Third World Newsreel, *America* (still), 1969, single-channel video, sound, 30 min.
Courtesy Third World Newsreel.



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Civil Disobedience

Bakalar Gallery July 18 – October 29, 2017

List Projects: Civil Disobedience presents a program of documentaries, news footage, artist's films and videos focusing on moments of political resistance and public demonstration from the early 20th century through today. Featuring records from 1930s "hunger marches," the historic Civil Rights and women's movements, anti-war action, gay liberation and AIDS activism, the Black Lives Matter movement, and recent Women's Marches, the exhibition considers the history of resistance as well as the role that artists and documentarians play in chronicling and confronting abuses of power and social injustice.

DAILY SCREENING PROGRAM

1. The Workers Film and Photo League

The National Hunger March, 1931; 11 min.
America Today and The World in Review, 1932; 11 min.

The Workers Film and Photo League was an organization of filmmakers, photographers,

writers, and projectionists in the 1930s, dedicated to documenting the US Labor Movement and using film and photography for social change. *Courtesy MoMA Circulating Film & Video Library.*

2. The 1960s: Civil Rights Movement

Videofreex, *Fred Hampton: Black Panthers in Chicago, 1969*; 23:10 min.

Formed in 1969 when David Cort and Parry Teasdale met at the Woodstock Music Festival, the Videofreex was a video collective that organized around the use of portable consumer video equipment to produce independent media. From 1969 to 1978, the collective produced several thousands of video tapes, installations, and multimedia events. In this video, Videofreex members interview Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton shortly before his death at the hands of Chicago police. *Courtesy Video Data Bank (VDB).*

Madeline Anderson, *I Am Somebody, 1970*; 29:43 min.

Madeline Anderson is a pioneering African-American television and documentary producer, director, editor, and writer. Her groundbreaking short film, *I Am Somebody*, documents a strike in 1969 at the Medical College Hospital of the University of South Carolina organized by over 400 black women workers standing in solidarity to demand a fair wage increase. *Courtesy Icarus Films.*

Kevin Jerome Everson and Claudrena N. Harold. *We Demand*, 2016; 10:20 min.

This film by Kevin Jerome Everson and Claudrena N. Harold tells the story of the anti-Vietnam War Movement from the perspective of James R. Roebuck, a northern-born African-American student at the University of Virginia during the late

1960s and early 1970s. The filmmakers restage scenes from a ten-day period of unprecedented student upheaval at the University, when Roebuck, the first black president of UVA's Student Council, confronted a series of political challenges and existential dilemmas. *Courtesy Picture Palace Pictures.*

3. The 1960s: Social Unrest and Anti-War Protest

Storm de Hirsch. *Trap Dance*, 1968; 1:52 min.

Storm de Hirsch, an American poet and filmmaker, was a central figure in the 1960s avant-garde film scene in New York City. "An Angry Arts 'protest film' with black and white visuals," in the artist's words, this hand-scratched work combines abstract imagery and appropriated footage including images of fighter planes dropping bombs in Vietnam. *Courtesy Film-Makers' Cooperative.*

Leonard M. Henny. *Peace Pickets Arrested for Disturbing the Peace*, 1968; 6:40 min.

Dutch filmmaker, writer, and educator Leonard M. Henny focused on the field of visual sociology and was known for his socially engaged documentary films. *Peace Pickets Arrested for Disturbing the Peace* depicts the preparations for and the development of the October 1967 non-violent, anti-draft demonstration at the Oakland Induction Center that led to the arrest of Joan Baez and 20 other pacifists. *Courtesy Film-Makers' Cooperative.*

Third World Newsreel. *America*, 1969; 32 min.

Third World Newsreel is an alternative media arts organization founded in 1967 supporting the production and distribution of independent film and video by and about people of color and social justice issues. This newsreel is a document of the anti-war movement in the US, featuring excerpts and interviews from a meeting of the group Vietnam Veterans Against the War, protests of the Black Panthers, and clashes between anti-war protesters and the police, among others. *Courtesy Third World Newsreel.*

Firing Line. excerpt from Episode 99: William F. Buckley and Allen Ginsberg, 1968; 13:24 min.

In this television interview excerpt from the long running public affairs series *Firing Line*, world views collide as conservative host William F. Buckley interviews counterculture luminary Allen Ginsberg. *Courtesy Hoover Institution Archives.*

4. Protest Actions at MIT

Richard Leacock. excerpts from *November Actions*, 1969; 17:35 min.

Richard Leacock, a pioneering filmmaker associated with the Direct Camera movement, was co-founder of and teacher at MIT's film school from 1968 through 1989. *November Actions* consists of four

sequences from an unfinished feature-length documentary that focused on the anti-Vietnam War actions on campus in late 1969. The full-length film will be screened on October 19 and 26 (see Thursday Night Screenings for details). *Courtesy MIT Museum.*

5. Women's Liberation, Gay and Gender Rights, AIDS Activism

Third World Newsreel. *Up Against the Wall Ms. America*, 1969; 6:09 min.

Up Against the Wall Ms. America is an early document of women's liberation activist tactics, presenting footage from the 1968 Miss America contest in which women introduced a sheep as winner to parody the sexism of the pageant. *Courtesy Third World Newsreel.*

Barbara Hammer. *Sisters!*, 1974, 8:08 min.

Barbara Hammer's *Sisters!* is an early document of lesbian activism, capturing scenes from the First Women's March in San Francisco and The West Coast Lesbian Feminist Conference at UCLA, both in 1973. *Courtesy the artist and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI).*

Gregg Bordowitz. *some aspects of a shared lifestyle*, 1986; 24:40 min.

Artist, writer, and activist Gregg Bordowitz made several videos about the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and 1990s, an alternative to the mainstream media's coverage of the disease and providing an outlet for activist groups such as ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), of which he was a member. This video begins with a response to the 1982 Supreme Court ruling upholding a sodomy law in the State of Georgia, effectively targeting gay men. *Courtesy Video Data Bank (VDB).*

Tara Mateik. *Toilet Training: Law and Order in the Bathroom*, 2003; 26:23 min.

In this experimental documentary from 2003, Tara Mateik, an artist, curator, and activist, looks at the psychological toll, health problems, and physical abuse suffered by transgender people forced to use bathrooms that do not correspond with the gender of their own identification. *Courtesy the artist.*

6. Economic Disparity and Political Polarization

Videofreex. *Money*, 1970; 2:52 min.

This short video features a deadpan performative action by Skip Blumberg in Lower Manhattan that is cut short by a security officer. *Courtesy Video Data Bank (VDB).*

Paper Tiger Television. *Tompkins Square Park: Operation Class Warfare on the Lower East Side*, 1992; 34:36 min.

Paper Tiger Television, a collective of artists, activists, and scholars, has made experimental and alternative community-oriented media utilizing public access television since 1981. *Tompkins Square Park: Operation Class Warfare on the Lower East Side* looks at the transformation of the titular park in downtown Manhattan that was once home to marginalized and disenfranchised communities, documenting forced gentrification through real estate developers and the ensuing class-based resistance. *Courtesy Paper Tiger Television.*

7. Black Lives Matter

Democracy Now! *From Ferguson to NYC, Protesters Mark National Day of Protest Against Police Brutality*, 2014; 4:17 min.

The independent news outlet Democracy Now! presents diverse sources of news and information. This short program recaps protests against police brutality around the country following the shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown by a white police officer in 2014. *Courtesy Democracy Now!*

C-SPAN, excerpt from live coverage of the Taxpayer March on Washington, September 12, 2009; 17:04 min.

The Taxpayer March on Washington, also known as the 9/12 Tea Party, was a Tea Party protest march from Freedom Plaza to the United States Capitol in Washington, DC. Organized by political advocacy group FreedomWorks, this C-SPAN footage captures the opening segment of the event. Protesters rallied against taxation, the size of government, abortion, President Barack Obama's proposed health care reform, federal spending, and other issues. *Courtesy C-SPAN.*

Jem Cohen. *Gravity Hill Newsreels: Occupy Wall Street no. 2 and no.3*, 2011; 3:48 min. and 5:15 min.

Jem Cohen is a New York-based filmmaker best known for his observational street footage and intimate portraits, capturing overlooked moments in time. His *Gravity Hill Newsreels* document the Occupy Wall Street movement in and around Zuccotti Park in New York City's Wall Street district in 2011 in a number of short vignettes. *Courtesy Video Data Bank (VDB).*

Ja'Tovia Gary. *An Ecstatic Experience*, 2016; 6:11 min.

Ja'Tovia Gary's work in film and video confronts traditional notions of representation, race, gender, sexuality, and power. Addressing recent acts of police violence against black people and the historical Civil Rights movement, *An Ecstatic Experience* is, she states, a "meditative invocation on transcendence as a means of restoration." *Courtesy the artist.*

Patricia Silva. *Mass Swell*, 2016; 14:07 min.

In *Mass Swell*, Lisbon-born, New York-based filmmaker Patricia Silva counteracts dominant media coverage of Ferguson protestors following the killing of Michael Brown in 2014. Filming live coverage off her computer screen, she shows the central role of black women in organizing direct actions, and underlines the role technology plays in facilitating expanded forms of public access and political organization. *Courtesy the artist.*

8. Women's Marches and Other Recent Protests

Jem Cohen. *Birth of a Nation*, 2017; 9:47 min.

In *Birth of a Nation*, Jem Cohen trains his camera on the events around Donald Trump's presidential inauguration as well as the next day's protests. *Courtesy Video Data Bank (VDB).*

Associated Press (AP). footage from Women's March, 2017; 3:17 min.

The Women's March on Washington, mounted on January 21, 2017, was organized to advocate for human rights, women's rights, healthcare reform, reproductive rights, and gender equality, among other issues. Presenting a range of voices and actions following the day of Donald Trump's inauguration, the footage captures the scale and energy of the demonstration. *Courtesy Associated Press Archives.*

PBS NewsHour. Interview with Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2015; 7:05 min.

In an interview on PBS's NewsHour, author Ta-Nehisi Coates discusses the history of violence directed against black people in the United States and his 2015 book *Between the World and Me*, which was published in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement and takes the form of a letter to his teenage son. *Courtesy PBS NewsHour.*

Meerkat Media Collective. *To Be Heard: Day #13 of the Trump Administration*, 2017; 3:17 min.

The Yemeni Bodega Strike in New York City was initiated by approximately 5,000 business owners and their supporters in response to President Trump's executive order to restrict immigration from seven Muslim countries, including Yemen. Meerkat Media Collective is based in New York and documents the actions of the day, ranging from an interview with a single Yemeni-American business owner to a rally at Borough Hall in downtown Brooklyn. *Courtesy Meerkat Media Collective.*

Paper Tiger Television. *Standing Rock Women's March*, 2016; 3:45 min.

Standing Rock Women's March documents the silent prayer led by indigenous women and allies following the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline as well as the violent response by police. *Courtesy Paper Tiger Television.*

Thursday Night Screenings

Each Thursday of the exhibition, a feature film will be screened in the Bakalar Gallery, 6–8 PM.

July 20, 27; August 3

I Am Not Your Negro, 2016

Directed by Raoul Peck

95 min.

Raoul Peck's 2016 film envisions James Baldwin's unfinished book project "Remember This House," a proposal to his literary agent that was to be a revolutionary, personal account of the lives and assassinations of three of his close friends: Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. At the time of Baldwin's death in 1987, he left behind only 30 completed pages of this manuscript.

August 10, 17, 31

Stonewall Uprising, 2010

Directed by David Heilbroner and Kate Davis
82 min.

Stonewall Uprising documents the 1969 police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar in NYC's Greenwich Village. Sparking six days of violent protests, the Stonewall rebellion was a turning point in the gay liberation movement and modern fight for LGBTQ rights in the United States.

September 7, 14, 21

Let the Fire Burn, 2013

Directed by Jason Osder

95 min.

Let the Fire Burn presents, via television proceedings and news footage, the events leading up to and surrounding an underreported 1985 stand-off between the black liberation group MOVE and the Philadelphia Police Department.

September 28; October 5, 12

Citizenfour, 2014

Directed by Laura Poitras

114 min.

Laura Poitras's 2014 documentary begins with the filmmaker receiving encrypted emails from someone with information on the US government's massive covert-surveillance programs. Poitras and reporter Glenn Greenwald meet the informant in Hong Kong to learn the alias "CITIZENFOUR" belongs to Edward Snowden, a high-level former CIA analyst. What unfolds is the handing over of classified documents providing evidence of mass indiscriminate and illegal invasions of privacy by the National Security Agency (NSA) and, eventually, Snowden's current asylum in Russia.

Oct 19, 26

November Actions, 1970/2017

Directed by Richard Leacock

76 min.

Richard Leacock, a pioneering filmmaker associated with the Direct Camera movement, was co-founder of and teacher at MIT's film school from 1968 through 1989. *November Actions* consists of four sequences from an unfinished feature-length documentary that focused on the Anti-Vietnam War actions on campus in late 1969.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Me(dia) Response: Self-Awareness and Activism through Art-Making with Artist Kate Gilbert

Friday, August 18, 12–2 PM

Making a Statement

Friday, September 15, 12–2 PM

Building an Understanding

Friday, October 20, 12–2 PM

Creative Action

All programs are free and open to the general public. RSVPs are required.

For more information about these events and to RSVP visit: listart.mit.edu/events-programs.

Please note:

The Bakalar Gallery will be temporarily closed August 22–27. Daily screening program will resume on August 29.

List Projects: Civil Disobedience is curated by Henriette Huldish, Curator, and Yuri Stone, Assistant Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

SPONSORS

The List Center is pleased to offer special programming for museum supporters including exclusive access to exhibitions, private tours, and collection visits. For more information, or to join, please visit: listart.mit.edu/support.

SUPPORT

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