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About EAI

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is one of the world's leading resources for moving image art. Founded in 1971, EAI is a New York-based nonprofit organization that fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution, and preservation of video and media art. EAI holds a major collection of over 3,500 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 also presents public programs such as artists' talks, exhibitions and panels; extensive digital resources; viewing access; technical facilities, and educational services. 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. www.eai.org



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ANTHONY RAMOS: Screening & Artist Talk



April 22, 2015

ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX



Anthony Ramos: Screening & Artist Talk

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is pleased to present a special evening with pioneering performance and media artist Anthony Ramos, who will screen his rarely seen, recently preserved video works from the early 1970s. Ramos' powerful video works join art with activism, the political with the conceptual, humor with cultural critique.

In a rare New York appearance, Ramos will screen selections from his earliest performance actions, as well as the extraordinary video collage *Nor Was This All By Any Means* (1978), which merges first-person narrative, performance, and mass media imagery to address issues of race and identity. The evening will also include the New York premiere of *Black & White* (1975), an early two-channel video piece, and a preview of the never-before-seen *Decent Men* (1977-2013), Ramos' extended monologue on his eighteen-month prison term for resisting the draft during the Vietnam War.

EAI is undertaking a major initiative to preserve Ramos' groundbreaking yet under-recognized early video works. The evening will include a conversation with the artist and a Q & A with the audience.

Program

Balloon Nose Blow-Up, 1972, 11:18 min, b&w, sound. (4 min excerpt)

Water Plastic Bag, 1972, 8:45 min, b&w, sound. (3 min excerpt)

Watermelon Heaven, 1972, 32:44 min, b&w, sound. (3 min excerpt)

Plastic Bag Tie-Up, 1972, 21:16 min, b&w, sound. (3 min excerpt)

Black & White, 1975, 12:58 min, color, sound. (two-channel composite)

Decent Men, 1977/2013, 70 min, color and b&w, sound. (6 min excerpt)

Nor Was This All By Any Means, 1978, 24 min, color, sound.

Anthony Ramos was among the earliest video artists to use the emergent video medium as a tool for mass media critiques and cultural documentation, and for inquiries into the politics of race in America. A graduate assistant of Allan Kaprow who performed in Kaprow's Happenings in the late 1960s, Ramos first began using video as a student at the California Institute of the Arts in the early '70s. In his earliest black-and-white video pieces, including the 1972 *Balloon Nose Blow-Up*, *Plastic Bag Tie-Up* and *Water Plastic Bag*, Ramos engages in direct performances for the camera that foreground physical endurance and politically-charged, often harrowing actions. (During this time he also participated in undocumented Happenings with artists Lowell Darling and Joe Ray.) Ramos' early two-channel video piece *Black & White* (1975, 12:58 min, with Ann Ramos), which investigates cultural and racial identities, will have its first New York screening at EAI.

Ramos' groundbreaking works of the late 1970s merge personal narrative, performance, and mass media critique. Ramos' most well known video, *About Media* (1977), is a pointed deconstruction of television news. Appropriating and upending a television interview about President Carter's amnesty for Vietnam War draft resisters, he exposes the artifice of mass media news reporting. *Nor Was This All By Any Means* (1978, 24 min) is a rarely seen video collage/essay in which Ramos challenges mass cultural representations of African-American and African identities.

In 2013, Ramos—who produced and edited several of his early video pieces at EAI—returned to EAI to revisit an unfinished work that he had begun in the 1970s. Built around an extraordinary extended monologue on his experiences in federal prison, the piece is a potent collage of performance—Ramos is a brilliant raconteur—and mass media images. Almost forty years after beginning the piece, Ramos recorded and edited a new performance element at EAI, integrating it into the now-completed *Decent Men* (1977-2013).

Ramos' remarkable video works—and his parallel remarkable biography—map an artistic and cultural topography that spans North America, Europe, Africa, and multiple points across the globe.

Anthony Ramos was born in 1944 in Providence, Rhode Island, and lives in the South of France. He studied painting at Southern Illinois University and received an M.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts, where he was graduate assistant to Allan Kaprow. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, and an Aspen Fellowship from the Aspen Institute, among other awards. In the 1970s Ramos was a video consultant for the United Nations and the National Council of Churches. He lived in Paris in the 1980s, where he was a Professor at the American Center and oversaw the first television cabling of Paris. During the 1970s and 1980s, Ramos traveled widely in Europe, Africa, China and the Middle East. He recorded video during the end of Portugal's colonial rule of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, in Teheran during the 1980 hostage crisis, and in Beijing just prior to the Tiananmen Square massacre. He taught at Rhode Island School of Design, New York University, and the University of California at San Diego, among others. In the late 1980s he turned to painting as his primary medium. He has exhibited his paintings at numerous international venues, including the American Jazz Museum and Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center, Kansas City; Biennale de Dakar, Senegal; and Galerie du Dragon, Paris, among others.

Ramos' video works have been shown internationally, including at the Pasadena Art Museum, California (1973); Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (1974); Whitney Museum of American Art (1975) and The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1992), among others. Recent screenings and exhibitions of Ramos' early video work include *Light Industry* in New York (2010); *Circa 1971: Early Video & Film from the EAI Archive* at Dia: Beacon (2011-2012); *The Embodied Vision: Performance for the Camera* at the Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado in Lisbon (2014); *Anthony Ramos: Vidéo et après* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (2014), and *Tell It Like It Is: Black Independents in New York, 1968-1986* at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, NY (2015).