

MARTHA ROSLER KITCHEN THEATRE



January 19, 2011
ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX
Celebrating 40 Years



MARTHA ROSLER: KITCHEN THEATRE

EAI is proud to present a screening and talk by **Martha Rosler** featuring her "kitchen videos." One of contemporary art's most important and incisive cultural critics, Rosler has frequently turned her keen analytical eye, her camera lens, and her sharp deadpan humor on the kitchen. The politics of food production and consumption has been a recurring subject in Rosler's work across four decades. In a series of videos, performances, installations and published works, she stages the performance of cuisine culture in America, highlighting its role in constructing class and gender identity and driving aspirational middle-class consumption.

At EAI, Rosler will premiere her most recent work, *Semiotics of the Kitchen: An Audition* (2011), alongside three of her landmark videos from the 1970s, *A budding gourmet* (1974), *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), and *The East Is Red, The West Is Bending* (1977).

Following the screening there will be an audience Q&A with the artist.

PROGRAM

A budding gourmet

1974, 17:45 min, b&w, sound

Semiotics of the Kitchen

1975, 6:09 min, b&w, sound

The East Is Red, The West Is Bending

1977, 19:57 min, color, sound

Semiotics of the Kitchen: An Audition

2011, 10:26 min, color, sound

Total Running Time: 46:53 min

Note: The program will be preceded by the premiere screening of EAI's 40th Anniversary Intro by artist Takeshi Murata, which was commissioned by EAI.

EAI 40th Anniversary Intro by Takeshi Murata, *2011, 1:04 min, color, sound*

A budding gourmet 1974, 17:45 min, b&w, sound

In *A budding gourmet*, Rosler explores the ideological processes through which food preparation comes to be seen as "cuisine," a product of national culture. Accompanied by the strains of a violin concerto, Rosler's deadpan narrator explains her reasons for wanting to become a gourmet. Photographs from food and travel magazines alternate as Rosler's narrator discusses food as a key to refinement, breeding, and, in the case of "Eastern" cuisines, spirituality. For her, cooking is a way of accumulating and demonstrating cultural capital, whether it is the haughty elegance of a France she's never visited, or the fiery exoticism of a Brazil from which she's just returned and is now "hers" to share with her friends.

Semiotics of the Kitchen 1975, 6:09 min, b&w, sound

Semiotics of the Kitchen adopts the form of a parodic cooking demonstration in which, Rosler states, "An anti-Julia Child replaces the domesticated 'meaning' of tools with a lexicon of rage and frustration." In this performance-based work, a static camera is focused on a woman in a kitchen. On a counter before her are a variety of utensils, each of which she picks up, names and proceeds to demonstrate, but with gestures that depart from the normal uses of the tool. In an ironic grammatology of sound and gesture, the woman and her implements enter and transgress the familiar system of everyday kitchen meanings — the securely understood signs of domestic industry and food production erupt into anger and violence. In this alphabet of kitchen implements, states Rosler, "when the woman speaks, she names her own oppression."

The East Is Red, The West Is Bending 1977, 19:57 min, color, sound

In an astute deconstruction of the political ideology that pervades the everyday, *The East is Red, The West is Bending* is a tongue-in-cheek presentation of a booklet that accompanies a newly marketed consumer appliance, a West Bend electric wok. In this performance-based work, Rosler reads the booklet in a manner that recalls an amateurish local television cooking demonstration. Demonstrating the wok at home, this "failed Mrs. Pat Boone" delivers an absurd corporate text. A few incongruous inserts into the booklet's language of corporate gentility suggest the imperialist attitudes that underlie attempts to convince us to transform ourselves into connoisseurs of exotic foreign cuisines.

Semiotics of the Kitchen: An Audition 2011, 10:26 min, color, sound

In 2003, for *A Short History of Performance, Part II*, at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, Rosler announced an open call for a live restaging of her seminal 1975 video piece *Semiotics of the Kitchen*. Twenty-six women participated in a rotating performance of Rosler's script at the Whitechapel. On a set stocked with culinary utensils, the participants were taped and "broadcast" on television monitors throughout the gallery via live feed. *Semiotics of the Kitchen: An Audition* documents the preliminary rehearsals with Rosler and the public event, the "audition."

Martha Rosler was born in Brooklyn, New York, where she lives and works; she spent a dozen years in California, where most of tonight's video works were made. She received a B.A. from Brooklyn College and an M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego. She has taught at the Städelschule in Frankfurt and at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Her works in several media are in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Guggenheim Museum in New York; Art Institute of Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Long Beach Museum of Art in California; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Tate and V&A in London; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona; Museo Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and Australian National Gallery, Canberra; and hundreds of colleges, universities, and independent centers around the world. Her work has been exhibited at the 50th Venice Biennale; 2004 Taipei Biennial; documentas 7 and 12, Kassel; several Whitney Biennials, New York; SkulpturProjekte Münster 07; and many other group exhibitions. The Martha Rosler Library toured from 2005 to 2009. A career retrospective, *Positions in the Life World*, was exhibited at 5 European cities and at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, and Institute of Contemporary Photography, New York, from 1998 to 2000. A major exhibition, *As If*, is currently on view at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Torino.

Rosler was awarded the Spectrum International Prize in Photography for 2005 and the Oskar Kokoschka Prize in 2006. She received an Anonymous Was A Woman Award in 2007 and in 2008 was the United States Artists Nimoy Fellow. In 2009 she held a residency at Civitella Ranieri in Umbertide, Italy. She received a Guggenheim Museum Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010. In 2011 she will be a DAAD Artist in Residence in Berlin.

Forthcoming this year is *The Art of Cooking*, a "lost" manuscript of Rosler's on the rhetorics of cooking and of art production, made up almost entirely of quotations from cooking manuals and books on gastronomy, in production with the cooperation of e-flux.

EAI: Celebrating 40 Years: Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is one of the world's leading nonprofit resources for video art. A pioneering advocate for media art and artists, EAI fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution and preservation of video art and digital art. EAI's core program is the distribution and preservation of a major collection of over 3,500 new and historical media works by artists. EAI's activities include viewing access, educational services, extensive online resources, and public programs such as artists' talks, exhibitions and panels. The Online Catalogue is a comprehensive resource on the artists and works in the EAI collection, and also features extensive materials on exhibiting, collecting and preserving media art: www.eai.org

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Electronic Arts Intermix 535 West 22nd Street, 5th Floor New York, NY 10011
info@eai.org (212) 337-0680 tel (212) 337-0679 fax www.eai.org