

ARTS: 'Broadcast' News

Museum exhibit gives perspective to world of communication media.

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Special to the Jewish News

The work of Jewish video artist Dara Birnbaum is among the group exhibit "Broadcast" on view Sept. 12-Dec. 28 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit.

The exhibit will be joined with two other group shows - "Becoming: Photographs From the Wedge Collection" and "Business As Usual" - running during the same time period.

The opening reception for the exhibit is at 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 12, and includes a musical program performed by the featured balladeers of Blanche and the anarchic pop members of Gardens.

"Dara Birnbaum represents the first generation of video artists," says curator Irene Hofmann, executive director of the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore and former exhibitions director at the Cranbrook Art Museum.

"Her piece Hostage, with six televisions placed in overhead diagonals and a lower screen, addresses media coverage of a kidnapping and the role of TV in this kind of crisis situation."

"Broadcast," organized with the assistance of Independent Curators International in New York, features pieces by 13 artists offering examples of video, sound and installation projects. Seen together, they provide historical perspective to the world of communication media starting in the 1960s.

"This exhibit was inspired by the work of Chris Burden, one of the artists in the show," explains Hofmann, who references Burden's staged hostage broadcast with a TV host held at knifepoint.

"We were looking for the possibilities necessary to explore the bridging of contemporary life experience with contemporary art, and there will be opportunities for visitors to broadcast themselves."

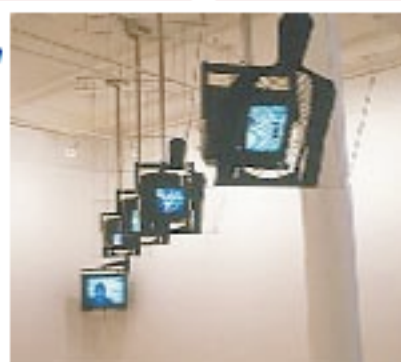
The exhibit introduces manipulated news footage, an installation about aliens and a section about communications from a ship. All the sounds, images and presentation strategies of mass media are used to reveal the mechanisms and power structure of broadcasting systems, according to the exhibition planners.

"Becoming: Photographs From the Wedge Collection" incorporates portraiture to show the ways in which personal and cultural identity are created, affirmed and challenged.

"Business As Usual" addresses the complex intersection of art and commerce and the function of art in a culture dominated by the market. Five artists use everyday corporate materials, such as logos and production systems.

Throughout the span of the exhibits, there will be special programs to enhance the subjects - artist and curator lectures, family workshops, musical presentations, poetry and fiction readings and films.

"The complex technology of "Broadcast" demands that we spend more time with the exhibit," says Hofmann, who works with a non-collecting institution having a vision comparable to MOCAD. "Classes all over our region studied the collection and learned how we're a laboratory for new art."



Dara Birnbaum's Hostage addresses media coverage of a kidnapping.