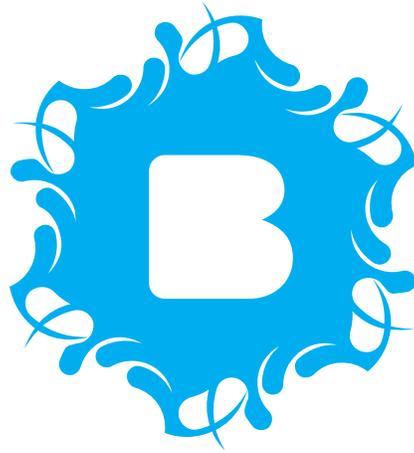


## Exhibition Reviews

***Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection,***  
Curated by Maura Reilly and Nicole Caruth, Brooklyn Museum,  
New York, New York, October 2008 – February 2009

1. Press Release, Brooklyn Museum
2. "Goings on About Town, Art: Masculine Feminine." The New Yorker 3 Nov. 2008. P. 14.
3. "The Big Six: Uptown and Beyond." The L Magazine 21 Jan-3 Feb 2009. P. 44.
4. "Feminist Works from Brooklyn Museum's Collection at Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art," ArtDaily.org Oct 31, 2008.  
[http://artdaily.org/index.asp?int\\_sec=2&int\\_new=26922](http://artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=2&int_new=26922)
5. John Wyver. "Essential Films about the Arts: Girls (and two boys) on film." Illuminationsmedia.co.uk, Nov 2, 2008.  
[http://www.illuminationsmedia.co.uk/blog/index.cfm?start=111&news\\_id=123](http://www.illuminationsmedia.co.uk/blog/index.cfm?start=111&news_id=123)

# Press Release



August 2008

## **Feminist Works from Collections on View in Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art At Brooklyn Museum October 31, 2008 through February 8, 2009**

*Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection*, an exhibition of nearly 50 works drawn from the holdings of the Brooklyn Museum and the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art will be on view in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art October 31, 2008 through February 8, 2009. Inspired by *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago, this exhibition features artists whose work has challenged the status quo and rise above the narrow roles imposed on women, particularly within the canons of art history.

The installation was organized by Maura Reilly, Curator of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, and Nicole Caruth, former Manager of Interpretive Materials. The exhibition title references the idea of the “master’s house” from two perspectives: the museum as the historical domain of white male artists and professed masters of art history, as well as domestic space often considered a woman’s proper province.

The majority of the exhibition comprises works by self-declared feminists and artists of later generations working within the historic framework of feminist art. The work represents widely diverse forms and ideas, suggesting that feminist art is not limited to a specific look or reading.

Among the works on view are Carrie Mae Weems’s *Untitled (Man Smoking/Malcolm X)*, 1990, from her *Kitchen Table* series, which explores human experience from the vantage point of an African American female subject; a “femmeage” painting by Miriam Schapiro titled *Agony in the Garden* that pays homage to Frida Kahlo; a haunting print by Kara Walker of a self-empowered heroine from the American antebellum South; and a bunny sculpture by Nayland Blake that challenges constructions of masculinity. Among the important loans from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections is one of Hannah Wilke’s major sculptures, *Rosebud*, from 1976.

Also included are several works previously on view that will be familiar to Museum visitors, seldom-seen works on paper, and a particular emphasis on recent acquisitions. Among the recent acquisitions on view are the 1979 work *Sweet Smell of Sage Enters the Room* by Ida Applebroog, whose site specific installation *Everything is Fine* was on view in 1992 as a part of the Grand Lobby series; and a 1981 photograph of a

## **Brooklyn Museum**

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carved stylized female figure in limestone by Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta from her *Goddess* series taken in Jaruco, Cuba; Tomoko Sawada's portrayal of herself as thirty different candidates for arranged marriages in Japan depicted in a variety of costumes from colorful kimonos and traditional Japanese dress to modestly tasteful, modern outfits. Others include works from Berni Searle's famous *Colour Me* series (1998–2000) that addresses the colonial history of the artist's native Cape Town, South Africa, employing the language of ethnography to display her body as a fetishized, racialized object; and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's painting *Ghost Dance Dress* from 2000, which is an iconic, spiritual work exploring the challenges of American and Native American cultural coexistence through the central symbol of a Plains woman's dress.

*Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection* is the latest in a series of exhibitions in the main temporary exhibition space of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art that was inaugurated in 2007 with the landmark exhibition *Global Feminisms*, co-curated by Dr. Reilly and feminist scholar Linda Nochlin.

*Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection* is made possible by the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation.

End

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Admission:

Contribution \$8; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$4. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48.  
On-site parking available.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

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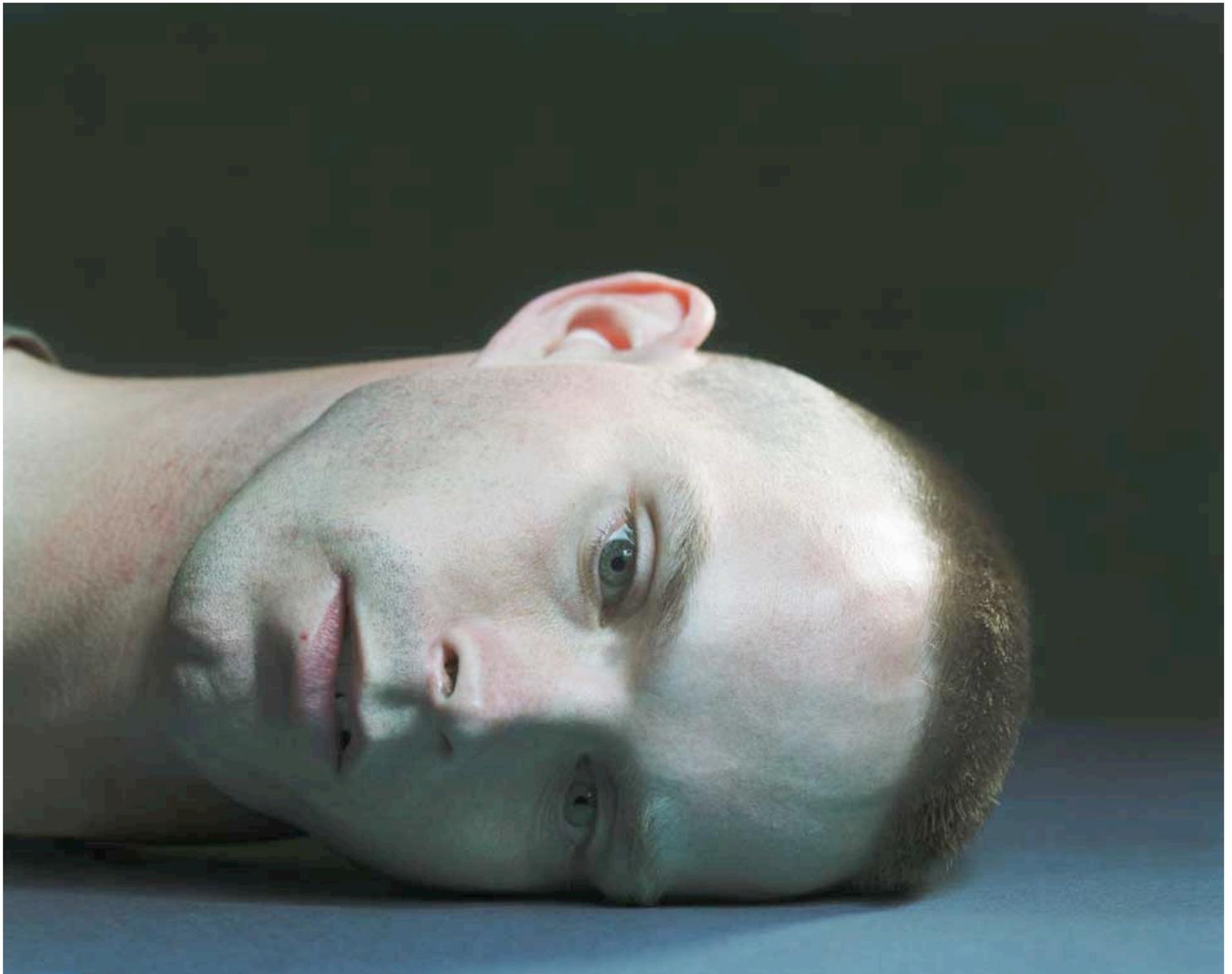
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## Feminist Works from Brooklyn Museum's Collection At Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art



Suzanne Opton (American, b. 1945), *Soldier: Claxton – 120 days in Afghanistan, Fort Drum, NY, 2005*, Digital print, Edition 1 of 5, 32 X 40 in. (81.3 c 101.6 cm), Gift of Rudolph DeMasi, by exchange, Photo: courtesy of the artist.

**BROOKLYN, NY.**- Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection, an exhibition of nearly 50 works drawn from the holdings of the Brooklyn Museum and the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art will be on view in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art October 31, 2008 through February 8, 2009. Inspired by The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago, this exhibition features artists whose work has challenged the status quo and rise above the narrow roles imposed on women, particularly within the canons of art history.

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Among the works on view are Carrie Mae Weems's Untitled (Man Smoking/Malcolm X), 1990, from her Kitchen Table series, which explores human experience from the vantage point of an African American female subject; a "femme" painting by Miriam Schapiro titled Agony in the Garden that pays homage to Frida Kahlo; a haunting print by Kara Walker of a self-empowered heroine from the American antebellum South; and a bunny sculpture by Nayland Blake that challenges constructions of masculinity. Among the important loans from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections is one of Hannah Wilke's major sculptures, Rosebud, from 1976.

Also included are several works previously on view that will be familiar to Museum visitors, seldom-seen works on paper, and a particular emphasis on recent acquisitions. Among the recent acquisitions on view are the 1979 work Sweet Smell of Sage Enters the Room by Ida Applebroog, whose site specific installation Everything is Fine was on view in 1992 as a part of the Grand Lobby series; and a 1981 photograph of a carved stylized female figure in limestone by Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta from her Goddess series taken in Jaruco, Cuba; Tomoko Sawada's portrayal of herself as thirty different candidates for arranged marriages in Japan depicted in a variety of costumes from colorful kimonos and traditional Japanese dress to modestly tasteful, modern outfits. Others include works from Berni Searle's famous Colour Me series (1998-2000) that addresses the colonial history of the artist's native Cape Town, South Africa, employing the language of ethnography to display her body as a fetishized, racialized object; and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's painting Ghost Dance Dress from 2000, which is an iconic, spiritual work exploring the challenges of American and Native American cultural coexistence through the central symbol of a Plains woman's dress.

Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection is the latest in a series of exhibitions in the main temporary exhibition space of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art that was inaugurated in 2007 with the landmark exhibition Global Feminisms, co-curated by Dr. Reilly and feminist scholar Linda Nochlin.

Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection is made possible by the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation.

## Today's News

October 31, 2008

[Raphael's Masterpiece "Madonna of the Goldfinch" Presented Fully Restored After Ten Years](#)

[Neue Nationalgalerie Presents Cult of the Artist: Jeff Koons - Celebration](#)

[Madonna Meets Mao - Selected Works from the Yageo Foundation Collection](#)

[Prints and Multiples at Christie's New York Totaled \\$8.1 Million](#)

[Museum für Angewandte Kunst Koln Opens New Design Department](#)

[Artist Couples - Love, Art and Passion Opens at Wallraf-Richartz-Museum](#)

[Art Forum Berlin: More Collectos - More Curators - More Journalists](#)

[Delaware Art Museum Presents Third Annual Miniatures Exhibition](#)

[No Standing Only Dancing: Photographs by Rennie Ellis](#)

## Most Popular Last Seven Days

1.- Teotihuacan's Emblematic Monument, The Sun Pyramid, Still an Enigma for Archaeologists

2.- \$250,000 First-Place Prize Goes to Grand Rapids , Michigan Artist Chris LaPorte

3.- John Lennon's Son Julian and First Wife Cynthia Unveil Monument on Anniversary

4.- Stunning Nudes by Photographer Rankin at Annroy Gallery, London

5.- Rediscover Renowned Masterworks of Early Photography at the Phillips Collection

6.- Darker-than-Usual Turn with Sunday's Episode of 'The Simpsons' with Opening by Graffiti Artist Banksy

Feminist Works from Brooklyn Museum's Collection At Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art

[Aspen Art Museum Presents ARAC@AAM: Anderson Ranch](#)

[The Royal Academy of Arts Launches GSK Contemporary](#)

[MAM Presents Yinka Shonibare, MBE: A Flying Machine for Every Man, Woman and Child](#)

[Peter Kogler Opens at Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien](#)

[Columbia Museum of Art To Receive Major Donation From the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection](#)

[Steeling the Gaze: Portraits by Aboriginal Artists Opens](#)

[Eleventh Annual Edition Artists' Book Fair Opens in New York](#)

[Dallas Museum of Art Names John Easley Chief Development Officer](#)

[Academy of Fine Arts Vienna Presents Mark Lewis](#)

[7.- The Hand of God? Strange Phenomenon at Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery](#)

[8.- Ai Weiwei Presents New Commission in The Unilever Series at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall](#)

[9.- Positions of Nude Art Photography at Camera Work Gallery](#)

[10.- "Picasso: Masterpieces From the Musée National Picasso" Opens at Seattle Art Museum](#)

### Related Stories

[Royal Academy of Arts Announces Jeff Koons as New Honorary Member of the Royal Academy](#)

[Kunsthaus Zürich Revives First Museum Exhibition Devoted to Pablo Picasso](#)

[19th Century Quill Pen Given to Russian Prince Aleksander Gorchakov to Sell for £100,000 at Bonhams](#)

[Exhibition at Yale Center for British Art Assesses the Career and Legacy of British Architect James Stirling](#)

[U.S. Collector and Gallery Owner Larry Gagosian Tops 2010 Art Review Power List](#)

[Exhibition at Berlin's German Historical Museum Views Hitler's Hold on Germans](#)

[Art World Acts to Save Energy and Money, Mayor Launches Green Visual Arts Guide at Frieze Art Fair](#)

[Jewish Museum in New York Exhibitor Shows Key Works by Top Women Artists](#)

[Joshua Hagler and George Pfau: Nearly Approaching Never To Pass at Reaves Gallery](#)

[Up to 100 Greek Culture Ministry Workers Shut Down the Acropolis, Clash with Police](#)

## Menu

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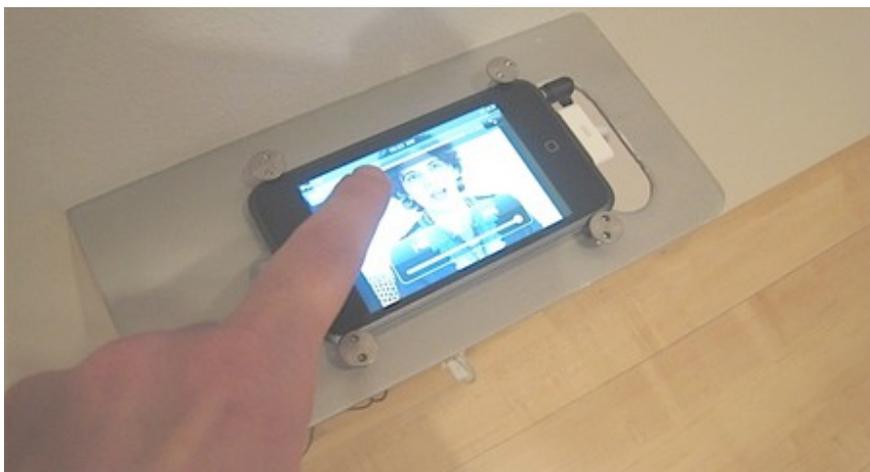
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## Girls (and two boys) on film

02 November 2008 posted by [John Wyver](#)

I must have travelled to New York at least forty times but I've never been to the [Brooklyn Museum](#). It's not hard to get to (subway lines 2 and 3 stop right outside) but somehow its offerings from Egyptian masterpieces to contemporary art have never tempted me out of Manhattan. Now, however, it's high on my list for a visit the next time I cross the Atlantic -- and that's entirely because over the last few months I feel I've got to know the museum through its [excellent blog](#). On Friday the museum opened [Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection](#). This is accompanied by eleven short [video interviews online](#) and (as above) in the galleries -- and these have focussed some questions for me about how museum videos are developing.

The show, which runs until 5 April 2009, is a display of around 50 works, mostly from the museum's collection but also some loans. Among the artists featured are Kiki Smith, Tracey Emin, Tracey Moffatt and Lorna Simpson, and as the exhibition website details,

Most of the paintings, sculpture, works on paper, and videos in the exhibition are by self-declared feminists and artists of later generations working within the historic framework of feminist art. The widely diverse forms and ideas on view suggest that feminist art is not limited to a specific look or reading.

As their blog and [flickr group](#) demonstrate, many of the staff at the Brooklyn Museum are very engaged by the possibilities of new media -- and indeed they just [won an award](#), linked to the book [Groundswell](#), for their implementation of social media in various contexts. ([Museum 2.0](#) has a [great five-part discussion](#) of museums, social media and Groundswell, to which we'll return in one or more future posts.) For Burning Down the House they have recorded and posted 11 short video interviews with featured artists, and these run consecutively (or can be individually selected) in this YouTube playlist.

'Both at the first and now...'  
[\[Updated\]](#)  
 Initial previews for Hamlet, plus other reactions and blogs

[Blogging the Bard](#)  
 Links to all the Hamlet posts

[Blogging the Bard II: Macbeth](#)  
 A round-up of posts from making Macbeth

[Let's send Mark Thompson to Exeter](#)  
 Time for a radical approach to classic drama

[Towards 2016: \[3\] the Big Idea](#)  
 The campaign starts here for a quatercentenary Complete Works

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 The visual arts on BBC TV in 1936-39

[Front row](#)  
 Sky Arts' new series of Playhouse Live

[The Gates: thank you, Slarek](#)

A terrific DVD Outsider review of our DVD release

[Out of the past](#)  
Adam Curtis' archive blog, The Medium and the Message

[Sunday links](#)  
The week's miscellany including films and football

[TV Shakespeare: the early years \[updated\]](#)  
The Bard on the box at the BBC, 1939-39

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The artists (who include two men, Nayland Blake and Ward Shelley) were asked to define feminist art and to speak about the specific work included in the show. The responses of some to the first question are excluded, but those of others range from a nuanced resistance to the question (Polly Apfelbaum, Ida Applebroog) to a detailed discussion from Carolee Schneemann. But all speak thoughtfully and revealingly about their creations (apart from Ida Applebroog, who addresses only her resistance to definitions). Tracey Moffatt details the personal background to her [1999 video Lip](#), Suzanne Opton explains her intentions in her [large-format portraits](#) of soldiers serving in Iraq, and Carolee Schneemann's contribution is essential as context for understanding her iconic image [Interior Scroll](#), 1975/2004 (which interestingly, given its explicit subject-matter, is reproduced in the video but not -- as far as I can see -- on the museum's website).

A [blog post](#) (from which the image above comes) discusses the museum's innovative display strategy using the iPod Touch in the gallery, but it's the production of the shorts that really interests me. They were recorded using the low-end [Flip Video digital cameras](#), which can be bought on Amazon.com for under £80. The production quality is, well, let's say limited, with flat lighting and (and for some of the shorts this is being generous) variable sound.

Most important of all, and most disappointing, there are only brief, referencing shots in the videos of the artworks under discussion. These come at the opening of each video in the form of a single slide -- and there are no details, no movement over the artwork, no return once the artist has spoken, and no presentation of the material object in a gallery space. All of which might be fine if you're looking at the video in the gallery alongside the work, but is frustrating and limiting when you're accessing it on YouTube from four thousand miles away.

For me, it's challenging to contrast these shorts with our practice in making similar videos, both for [theEYE series](#) and also for galleries like the [Ferens Art Gallery](#) in Hull. For these, we use broadcast-quality cameras and professional directors of photography. We take the time to film the actual artworks, which can involve travelling to shows, waiting for the works we want to shoot to be put on display, or (as with the Ferens) working with the gallery to have them specially installed for the filming.

All of which costs money, even when we work as cost-effectively as we do. At a complete guess, I'd say the likely differential in costs between the Ferens

shorts that we produced and those from the Brooklyn Museum is perhaps at least in the order of 3 to 1. So does the economy-induced, comparatively low quality of the Brooklyn tapes matter? Or actually is it just the basic information that you want as a viewer?

Are these videos perfectly acceptable online and in the gallery? But would they also be appropriate for a DVD, or for a broadcast programme? Or are we looking here at the beginnings of (another) revolution in production? Is self-produced video like this the dominant form for museums (and potentially many other contexts) in the future -- and will we see a polarisation of production, with a great deal of low-end work like this and high-end, immaculately edited HD images reserved for broadcasting?

At the moment, I feel that I have more questions about this than answers. Doubtless it's a discussion that will continue, here on our blog as in other places. But the Brooklyn tapes are well worth looking at, not least for what the artists actually say. And next time I'm in New York I'll definitely get on the 2 or the 3 to pay a visit.

[Comments \(4\)](#)

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### Comments

**Shelley** (02 November 2008 3:21 pm)

Hi John,

Thanks for posting this - it is a very interesting discussion. For us, we've got a couple factors going on.

We love the video that the IMA, Tate and MoMA are producing. In the museum world, they are the leaders in video that we look up to and demonstrate the quality of production that you mention, but in each of those cases those institutions have entire departments devoted to new media and they have budgets for pro equipment. By contrast, we have one person who doubles on our help desk and we have a limited budget that covers prosumer and consumer equipment. So you are seeing an attempt to do more with less ... of everything :) For the most part, it means we can accomplish straight documentation of some of the larger events that happen at the Museum which helps us have the material available for people who want it, but keep the production time light.

In this instance, with these 11 videos, I agree with you - on the web, it would be much richer to cut to the works when the artists talk about them, but in the exhibition experience we hope people focus on the works installed in the gallery. The slides at the top of the video are there to orient physical visitors to the work the video references ... at which point it would be ideal if the visitor shifts to look at the work in question. I won't know how well this is working for a while, but our thought was keep it as simple as possible to accomplish those goals. This is one of those instances where I wish we had more staff time to produce a second set of videos for the web that would cater directly to the needs of this audience, but we just don't have it :) In the interest of accessibility we decided to post these to the web anyway in the hope that they will be useful. I hope people will tell us if they find it frustrating or helpful, so we can know more for the next time around. They do seem to work well when we embed them on collection pages (grr, can't post a link, darn spammers) where the work is easily referenced.

In a month or two, I'll post a follow-up with our usage findings. I'll remember to reference some of these issues. This is definitely a learning experience for us that we hope to share with others and discussion like this is exactly what we hope for :)

**John Wyver** (03 November 2008 6:55 am)

Thanks Shelley -- really interesting response. (Sorry about not being able to post links; that's something we're considering at the moment.) I look forward to following more of what you're doing -- and to continuing the dialogue.

**Deborah Wythe** (03 November 2008 1:25 pm)

Hello John,  
Just responding to your note that the Carolee Schneemann photo is on the video, but not on our collection on the Web page. It's workload, not the fact that it's an explicit image. Priority for photography and scanning is based on requests by staff and members of the public and this one hadn't surfaced yet. Big collection, lots of photography and scanning to do! We're working on it ...  
Deborah (Digital Lab)

**jan klink** (08 February 2009 9:36 am)

We are a small museum with stained glass art and enamel art. We make videos with a Sony VX2000 of artists telling something about their work. Visitors can view these videos at a tv-screen in the museum. They like these videos very much. We have the videos also on our website [www.vlakglas-en-emaillekunst.nl](http://www.vlakglas-en-emaillekunst.nl) and on [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com). Some visitors view the videos before they come to the museum. We have no professionals working at the museum. We are looking for museum with the same experience.

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