

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

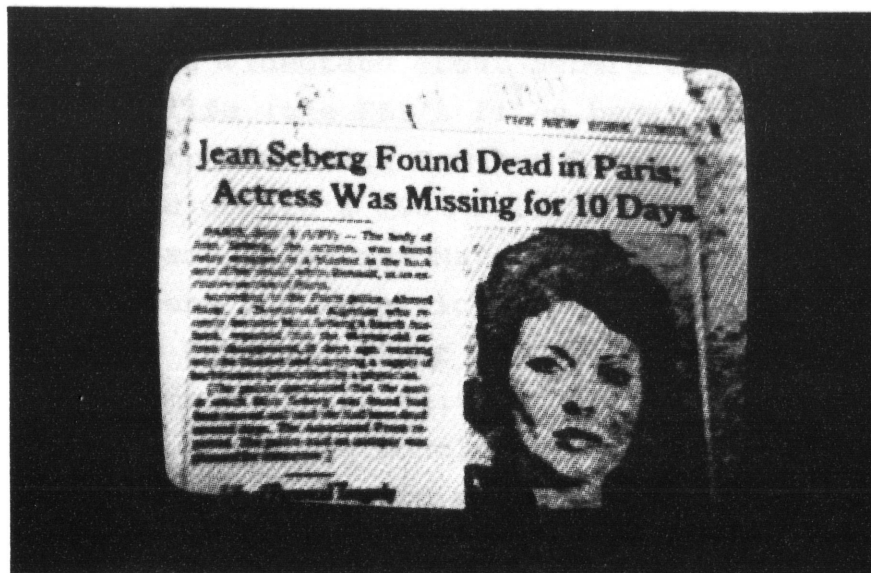
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Release #57

For Immediate Release

August 31, 1981

ACTRESS JEAN SEBERG IS THE SUBJECT OF MULTI-MEDIA INSTALLATION AT MoMA



Jean Seberg's life and death were perceived by the public in many ways -- through her film persona, her much-publicized private life, the media attention surrounding her death and the subsequent exposure of the FBI's role in both her private life and the public's perception of it. In her installation "The Media Matrix and the Jean Seberg Story" artist Margia Kramer examines the truths and fictions surrounding Seberg, who left her small, mid-western American hometown at 18, when she was discovered and chosen by Otto Preminger to play the title role in his 1956 film Saint Joan. Kramer's installation will be on view at MoMA from the 18th of September through the 27th of October.

In 1979, Jean Seberg committed suicide at the age of 41. Beginning the same year, Margia Kramer carried out detective-like research using declassified documents obtained through the 1974 Freedom of Information Act. Her findings will be displayed in this exhibition, installed in the MoMA Video Gallery, through a series of photostat text panels and a continuously playing videotape.

The transparent text panels are based upon the FBI files on Jean Seberg.

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Presented in the form of photostats of the declassified documents, they are shown with other media materials, as well as notes that decipher the deleted sections from the FBI's Seberg files. The viewer is invited to move freely through these texts, which are suspended from the gallery ceiling. Behind the panels, and partially illuminating them, are two monitors continuously playing a videotape about Seberg and the effects of the FBI's surveillance on her life (the FBI's files began immediately after her first association with the Black Panther Party.) The tape cuts between clips of Seberg in Jean-Luc Godard's 1960 film Breathless, and sections from an ABC "20/20" program, broadcast May 22, 1980, about the actress's life and the lives of others who were victimized by COINTELPRO, the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program. Other readings, including magazine interviews with Seberg and her mother, are edited together with more scenes of Seberg's life and work. The tape concludes with a Washington Post editorial apologizing for an earlier article which implied that the FBI contributed to Jean Seberg's early death.

Margia Kramer is a self-described "artist-activist" who is interested in freedom and the effects of surveillance on individual lives. Her work has been shown in museums and galleries in this country and abroad, including New York, Chicago, Toronto and London. She received her M.A. from the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University.

A handbook, available at MoMA, was recently published by the artist, which serves as a guide through the media-related documents in the show.

Otto Preminger's SAINT JOAN will be screened in the MoMA Auditorium Friday, October 16 at 6:00 p.m.

On four Thursdays in September and October, the Donnell Library will present a special Jean Seberg Film Festival. (Contact Marie Nesthus, 621-0611 for further information.)

The Museum of Modern Art's Video Program is directed by Assistant Curator Barbara London of The Department of Film. Video exhibitions are made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

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For further information, please contact Alicia Springer, Film Press Representative, 956-7289.

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