

LOOKING AT MUSIC 3.0 EXPLORES THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON
CONTEMPORARY ART IN NEW YORK IN THE 1980s AND 1990s AND THE BIRTH
OF "REMIX CULTURE"

Gallery Exhibition Is Accompanied by a Film Program in March 2011

Looking at Music 3.0
February 16–June 6, 2011
The Yoshiko and Akio Morita Media Gallery, second floor

NEW YORK, February 2, 2011—Looking at Music 3.0, the third in a series of exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art exploring the influence of music on contemporary art practices, focuses on New York in the 1980s and 1990s and the birth of "remix culture." The exhibition is on view in The Yoshiko and Akio Morita Media Gallery from February 16 through June 6, 2011. Highlighting a unique range of activity within the city during those decades, the exhibition addresses the birth of hip hop; new articulations of feminism as seen in video chain letters, zines, and raucous art and music performances; the continued artistic development of music videos; and the rise of the digital domain, where sound and image acquired a curious parity as sampled bits of electronic information, raising the curtain on new creative possibilities. Approximately 70 works from a wide range of artists and musicians are on view, including works by the Beastie Boys, Kathleen Hanna and Le Tigre, Keith Haring, Miranda July, Christian Marclay, Steven Parrino, and Run-D.M.C. A film exhibition closely linked to the artists and works on view in the gallery exhibition runs from March 2 to March 10, 2011, in MoMA's Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters. The exhibition is organized by Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, The Museum of Modern Art.

Ms. London states: "In this dynamic time period, imaginative forms of street art spread across the five boroughs, articulating the counter-culture tenor of the times. As the city transitioned from bankruptcy to solvency, graffiti, media, and performance artists took advantage of low rents and collaborated on ad hoc works shown in alternative spaces and underground clubs. Appropriation, also known as remixing, thrived."

The exhibition begins with a recording from the German band Kraftwerk, the track "Trans-Europe Express" (1977). Widely known for their pioneering role in electronic music, Kraftwerk used custom-made vocoders, synthesizers, and computer-speech software, introducing notable innovations into music technology. "Trans-Europe Express," which plays in a loop at an audio station, paved the way for many of the musicians and artists featured within the exhibition, where it is sampled twice: in "Planet Rock" (1982), by Afrika Bambaataa and the Sonic Soul Force, and in "(Always Be My) Sunshine" (1997), by Jay-Z featuring Foxy Brown and Babyface. Further

exploring New York–based hip hop artists, the exhibition includes music by the Beastie Boys, Run-D.M.C., and the Wu-Tang Clan, with audio tracks by each of the artists playing at audio stations. Beginning with neighborhood parties in the South Bronx in the early 1970s, hip hop eventually expanded the geography of New York’s Manhattan-centric music scene and became the dominant cultural movement among urban minorities in the 1980s.

The exhibition next looks at the ways musicians and artists responded to the city in the 1980s and early 1990s. With New York bankrupt, the AIDS crisis reaching its zenith, and drug use wreaking havoc on many neighborhoods, a wave of activism swept through the art and music worlds. Artists addressed topics such as the ongoing discrimination of the black community, as seen in Spike Lee’s video for Public Enemy’s “Fight the Power” (1989), and the government’s refusal to acknowledge the AIDS epidemic, as denounced by Keith Haring in his poster *IGNORANCE=FEAR/SILENCE=DEATH* (1989). Graffiti art had leapt from the street to the page, as seen in a print by the graffiti artist Lee Quinones, *CENTURY OF THE WIND* (1991), which is included in the exhibition.

The following section focuses on *Tellus Audio Cassette Magazine*, which launched in 1983 as a subscription-only bimonthly from the Lower East Side, a rough area of the city and a hotbed of creative activity. The brainchild of visual artist Joseph Nechtaval, curator Claudia Gould, and composer Carol Parkinson, and produced through the experimental recording studio Harvestworks/Studio PASS, *Tellus* magazine supported some of the city’s most innovative collaborations between artists and musicians for almost 20 years. The exhibition includes sound files from *Tellus* playing at an audio station, adjoined with the Double LP compilation *TellusTools* with a cover design by Christian Marclay.

A range of works by Christian Marclay, along with music by Brian Eno, David Byrne, and John Zorn, are part of the exhibition; each was a prominent figure in New York’s experimental art and music scenes of the 1980s and early 1990s. All four were interested in experimental composition and brought art theory to new music. A set of collaged vinyl records by Marclay, *Recycled Records* (1981–85), is on display, along with tracks by Eno and Byrne, artists who pioneered ambient and non-Western music crossovers, playing at audio stations. Zorn, a distinguished avant-garde composer, fused multiple genres, including jazz and punk, working with his band Naked City. A recording of “Speedfreaks,” a song performed by Naked City, plays in a loop within the exhibition.

As audio and video technology advanced and television was affected by MTV, artists reflected upon how commercial entities controlled mass communication and used technology to shape modern culture. Karen Finley, Dara Birnbaum, and Martha Rosler utilized this technology to criticize stereotypes of women promoted in the mass media, as seen in Birnbaum’s *Pop-Pop Video* (1980); an audio track by Finley, *Tales of Taboo* (1986); and a plate and track from Rosler’s untitled print portion of the portfolio *ARTIFACTS AT THE END OF THE DECADE* (1981). The limits of technology and its potential as a tool for activism are explored by the video work of Tom Kalin,

John Kelly, and Bob Beck, including Kalin's video *Nomads* (1993), Kelly's video *Pass the Blutwurst, Bitte, #1* (1986), and Beck's video *Girlfriend in a Coma* (1980). The wide distribution possibilities that video offered (and their continuation in today's distribution through the Internet) are a cornerstone of Seth Price's practice. His video *NJS Map* (2001–02), which traces the genealogy of one period in pop music called "New Jack Swing," is related to his ongoing project *Title Variable*, comprising several music compilations and published articles investigating technology's impact on music production.

Four music videos projected in the following section exemplify the vigor and effort that were put into this new art form: Keith Haring making a hand-drawn, theatrical garment for Grace Jones in "*I'm Not Perfect (But I'm Perfect for You)*" (1986); Diamanda Galás channeling both performance art and goth metal for "*Double-Barrel Prayer*" (1988); Long Island-based duo Eric B. and Rakim's extensive sampling from James Brown awakening other hip hop interest in "*The Godfather of Soul*"; and the video for A Tribe Called Quest's "*Scenario*," highlighting the band's playful and humorous approach to hip hop.

After the second wave of the Feminist Movement in the United States in the late 1960s and 1970s, so-called third-wave Feminism emerged from its point of genesis, the riot grrrl capital Portland, Oregon, in the 1990s. Inspired by the ethos of DIY (Do-It-Yourself), young women formed impromptu punk bands; wrote, pasted together, and photocopied self-published zines; and created their own independent methods of distribution. Several examples of those zines are on view. Performance artist, filmmaker, and writer Miranda July founded *Joanie 4 Jackie* in 1995 as an informal organization and active network, compiling video chain letters that gave young women the courage and confidence to continue making movies; a related poster and zine are on view in the gallery. A recording by *Le Tigre* also plays at an audio station; the band fused New Wave, electronic dance music, and the angry punk sound of the riot grrrl era with humorous lyrics to confront such social ills as police brutality and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's crackdowns in millennial New York.

In this era of genre-crossing, many musicians were active participants in the art scene, and vice-versa. Sonic Youth worked with artist Tony Oursler on the video for "*Tunic (Song for Karen)*" (1990), which plays on a monitor in the exhibition. Tony Conrad, a film, video, and sound pioneer and composer, formed the art band *XXX Macarena* with fellow artists Jutta Koether and John Miller. Conrad's video "*In Line*" (1986) is joined by a record sleeve from *XXX Macarena*. *Fisherspooner*, an electroclash performance duo that formed in 1998 and frequently performed in art galleries, skewered retro electropop and early Pet Shop Boys in their action-packed events, and the record sleeve from their album *#1* (2001) is on view.

The rise of computer culture and wider access to new technologies in the mid-1990s brought with it a host of new possibilities for artists to explore. The three interactive pieces on display are examples of how artists harnessed new tools to bring audiences into their work. Via an interactive CD-ROM, *Puppet Hotel* (1995), visitors have access to performance artist/composer

Laurie Anderson's modified violins, and are invited to play a tune. A CD-ROM by the Residents, *Freak Show* (1994), makes the answering machines and private diaries tucked away in freak show performers' caravans available. In Perry Hoberman's *Faraday's Ghost* (2000), a bar code wand activates the distinctive sounds of everyday appliances—toasters, radios, and vacuum cleaners.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Modern Mondays

Monday, May 16, 2011

Modern Mondays, a weekly program that brings contemporary, innovative film and moving-image works to the public, provides a forum for viewers to engage in dialogue and debate with contemporary filmmakers and artists. On May 16, a conversation will be held with the interdisciplinary artist Karen Finley, discussing "Tales of Taboo" and how the worlds of music, art, and language have intersected in her practice. Inspired by the performances of Dead Kennedys as a student in San Francisco and by the lyrics and persona of Boy George later in New York, Finley honed her theatrical work on the same "alternative" stages as fellow downtown Manhattan artists and musicians. Finley will read from her latest book, *The Reality Shows*.

Tickets: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with I.D.

Organized by the Department of Film and the Department of Media and Performance Art. Modern Mondays is made possible by Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro. Additional support is provided by The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

FILM PROGRAM:

Looking at Music 3.0

In conjunction with the gallery exhibition of the same name, this series explores the influence of music on contemporary art practices, focusing on New York in the 1980s and 1990s and the birth of "remix culture." These films and videos examine the birth of hip-hop; new articulations of feminism in video chain letters, zines, and raucous art and music performances; AIDS activism in public service announcements, street posters, and concerts; the continued artistic development of music videos; and the rise of the digital domain, where sound and image acquired a curious parity as sampled bits of electronic information, raising the curtain on new creative possibilities.

Organized by Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Grrrl Love and Revolution: Riot Grrrl NYC. 2010. USA. Directed by Abby Moser, Lucy Thane. From 1993 through 1998, Moser and Thane documented the underground feminist "riot grrrl" movement, a loose collection of bands and zines that used fiery rhetoric to address rape, domestic abuse, sexuality, and female empowerment. The film charts the development of riot grrrl in New York City over the course of three years. 30 min.

Belladonna. 1989. USA. Directed by Beth B, Ida Applebroog.

A chilling look at violence and the family, *Belladonna* includes recitations of statements by convicted child murderer Joel Steinberg and Nazi "death doctor" Joseph Mengele, and case studies from Freud's "A Child is Being Beaten." The readings are intercut with paintings by Applebroog, Beth B's mother. 25 min.

Jollies. 1990. USA. Directed by Sadie Benning.

Shot with a Pixelvision camera, Benning's short film is a chronicle of her crushes and kisses, tracing the development of her nascent sexuality. Addressing the camera with an air of seduction and romance, Benning allows the viewer a sense of her anxiety and delight as she comes to realize her lesbian identity. 11 min. Program 71 min.

Wednesday, March 2, 7:00 p.m., T2

Thursday, March 3, 4:00 p.m., T1

Krush Groove. 1985. USA. Directed by Michael Schultz. With Run-D.M.C., LL Cool J, Jam Master Jay, Sheila E., Russell Simmons.

Krush Groove is a dramatized retelling of the early days of the influential music label Def Jam Recordings, and specifically producer Russell Simmons's decision to borrow money from a street hustler in order to press Run-D.M.C. records. Filmed in the Bronx in the mid-1980s and featuring an array of rap luminaries, Schultz's film captures a golden era of East Coast hip hop. 97 min.

Friday, March 4, 4:00 p.m. T2

Sunday, March 6, 5:00 p.m. T2

Instrument. 1999. USA. Directed by Jem Cohen.

A collaboration between this fiercely independent filmmaker and the Washington D.C. band Fugazi, Instrument is a musical document of the band from 1987 through 1996. Portraying the musicians at work and hanging out, the film includes a wide range of materials, including concert footage, studio sessions, practice, touring, interviews, and close-up portraits of audience members from around the country. 115 min.

Friday, March 4, 7:00 p.m. T2

Saturday, March 5, 4:00 p.m. T2

Puppet Show. 1997. USA. Directed by Rita Ackermann. Cinematography by Chris Habib. Music by Thurston Moore, vocals by Kim Gordon.

While hidden from view, Ackermann manipulates her hand-painted, couture-outfitted puppets, acting out the story of a young woman struggling to make ends meet in the big city. This short documents the show's only performance, at the Learning Alliance in New York. 16 min.

Some Kind of Loving (Joanie 4 Jackie Co-Star Tape #3). 2000. USA. With videos by Karen Yasinsky, Jane Gang, Jennifer Reeder, Stephanie Barber, and Peggy Ahwesh.

In 1995, Miranda July founded Joanie 4 Jackie, an alternative video distribution network for women moviemakers. For Co-Star Tape #3, artist Astria Suparak selected the work of five women artists who explore the representation and cultural codes of female desire and sexuality. 60 min.

Saturday, March 5, 7:30 p.m. T2

Monday, March 7, 4:00 p.m. T2

Wigstock: The Movie. 1987. USA. Directed by Tom Rubnitz.

Documenting an early installment of the famous New York drag festival, this video was shot a decade before Rubnitz's celebrated feature-length documentary on the same subject. Presenting the Wigstock festival during its original Tompkins Square Park era, the video combines live performance footage and off-stage interviews. 20 min.

Making the Scene. 1985. USA. Directed by Kim Gordon. Edited and photographed by Tony Oursler.

Gordon's short documentary captures life at the West 21 Street incarnation of Danceteria, the first club in Manhattan to play videos and have two separate DJs perform nonstop for 12 straight hours. 11 min.

This Is a History of New York. 1988. USA. Directed by Jem Cohen.

Composed entirely from documentary street footage, Cohen's experimental film takes viewers through New York City, from prehistoric times to the Space Age. 20 min.

Program 51 min.

Sunday, March 6, 2:00 p.m. T2

Thursday, March 10, 4:00 p.m. T2

The Feeling of Power. 1990. USA. Directed by Robert Beck. Music by Stephen Vitiello, Shin Shimokawa.

A powerful collage of images and music, The Feeling of Power compares the "facts" captured by the camcorder with facts about the history of AIDS. This compelling call to action indicts the

government's refusal to acknowledge New York's peaking AIDS epidemic in the late 1980s. 9 min.
Put Blood in the Music. 1989. USA. Directed by Charles Atlas.

Concentrating on downtown art and music figures such as John Zorn and Karen Finley, Atlas's fast-paced Put Blood in the Music is a visually striking document of the downtown New York music scene of the 1980s. 75 min.

Wednesday, March 9, 4:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. T2

Le Tigre: On Tour. 2010. USA. Directed by Kerthy Fix.

This documentary presents an inside view of Le Tigre during the band's final tour. Fronted by Kathleen Hanna (formerly of the influential riot grrrl band Bikini Kill), Le Tigre is known for lyrics dealing with issues of feminism and the LGBT community. 30min.

Monday, April 4, 7:00 pm, T1

** Note: This screening is not part of the film series but is in conjunction with the gallery exhibition

No. 5

Press Contact:

Paul Jackson, (212) 708-9593, paul_jackson@moma.org

Margaret Doyle, (212) 408-6400, margaret_doyle@moma.org

For downloadable high-resolution images, register at MoMA.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)