

September 20, 2017

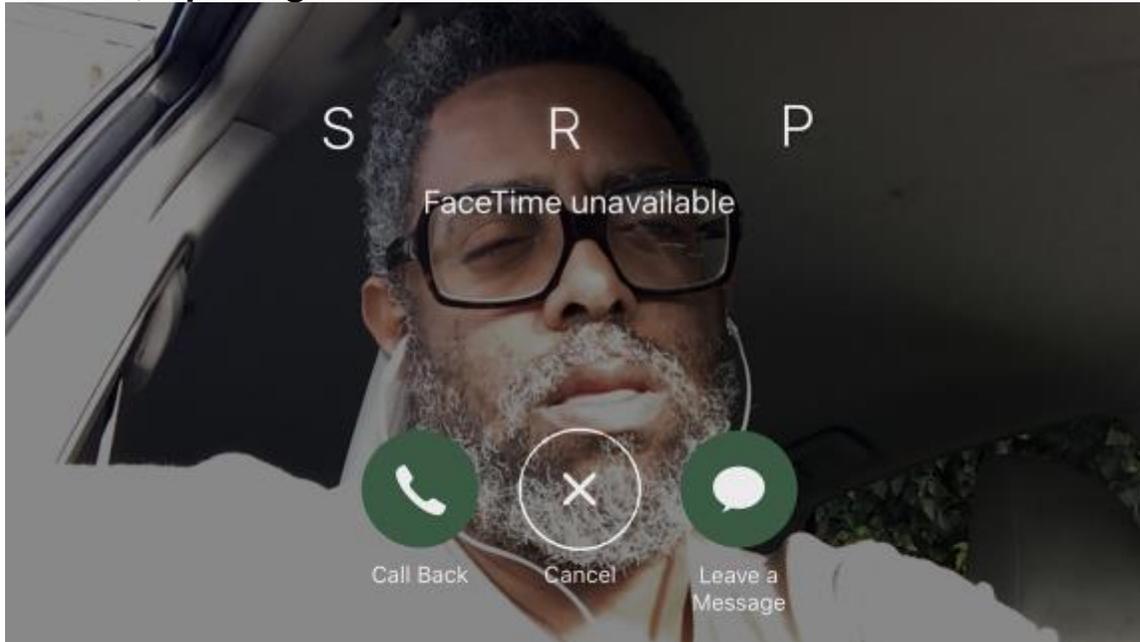
Media only:

Allison Peck 202.633.2825: pecka@si.edu

Jennifer Joy 212.202.3402: jen@suttonpr.com

Media website: hirshhorn.si.edu/press

**Hirshhorn Announces “The Message: New Media Works”
Curator Mark Beasley’s Debut Exhibition Melds Music, Film and Pop
Culture, Opening Nov. 18**



This fall, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden will present “The Message: New Media Works,” a new exhibition of five contemporary film and video installations that resonate with the voices of music, film and pop culture, on view Nov. 18–Feb. 2018. The first exhibition organized by Mark Beasley as the Hirshhorn’s new Curator of Media and Performance Art, “The Message” marks the Washington debut of leading international video artists **Camille Henrot, C.T. Jasper, Joanna Malinowska, Frances Stark, Hito Steyerl,** and **Arthur Jafa**, whose seminal Kanye West-backed “Love is the Message, The Message is Death” inspired the exhibition’s title.

Each video appropriates a common method of communication in today’s media-saturated world—the sermon, the web lecture, the concert, the music video and the online sex chat room—and uses its familiar format to question and provoke ideas around information overload in the global digital age. Music and language appear as common threads to weave all five works

together, as artists use them as tools to rewrite traditional narratives around theology, race and sexuality.

“‘The Message’ brings together a group of artists exploring social and cultural phenomena through the expanding field of video art,” Beasley said. “In an increasingly digital society, we see language, humor and music triumph as timeless and universal. I envision this exhibition as a musical LP, with each work unfolding as an individual track on a record connected by similar themes.”

In making her 2013 work, “Grosse Fatigue,” Camille Henrot mined the Smithsonian archives to uncover stories of the creation of the universe from a variety of religions and indigenous traditions. Images and video clips pop up in browser windows on a computer screen, set to a narrative soundtrack of spoken-word poetry, forming a collective “origin story” for the world. Hito Steyerl’s film essay-cum-performance lecture “How Not to be Seen,” also from 2013, instructs the viewer how one can remain invisible and avoid detection in an age of constant surveillance. C.T. Jasper and Joanna Malinowska’s “Halka/Haiti” (2015) addresses issues around globalization and colonization, staging a full-length Polish dramatic opera in a rural Haitian village populated by citizens of Polish descent. The expansive 30-foot curved screen and plastic deck chairs that are part of the installation seem to immerse viewers in the village square alongside its original Haitian audience.

In 2016, Arthur Jafa worked with Kanye West, who provided the soundtrack for “Love is the Message, The Message is Death,” a filmic essay of triumph, tragedy and resilience of Black life in America. Jafa’s award-winning work as a director and cinematographer—with Stanley Kubrick, Spike Lee, Jay-Z and Beyoncé—is now influencing a new wave of contemporary filmmakers. Lastly, in France Stark’s “My Best Thing” (2011) the artist records and computer animates her real-life encounters in online sex chat rooms, an unlikely and humorous basis for creative collaboration in the face of performance anxiety.

“New media is undisputedly the artistic innovation of the 21st century,” said Hirshhorn Director Melissa Chiu. “We are grateful to have Mark’s vision and expertise as an integral part of our institution, and look forward to continuing our inquiries and examinations at the forefront of this exciting medium.”

“The Message” furthers the Hirshhorn’s efforts to champion artists experimenting in new media, which began in 2005 with the “Black Box” series, a rotating exhibition space dedicated solely to the moving image, and has continued with significant acquisitions by Ed Atkins, Ragnar Kjartansson and Jesper Just, among others. Recently, the 2016 exhibition “Suspended Animation” showcased computer-generated video works that explored how we perceive reality in a digital world.

The exhibition joins the Hirshhorn’s 2017–18 schedule of diverse contemporary artists whose work reflects global conversations that shape history, politics and culture, including Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, Russian artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, German artist Markus Lüpertz, Swiss artist Nicolas Party, and American artists Yoko Ono, Theaster Gates and Mark Bradford.

About the Hirshhorn

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden is the national museum of modern and contemporary art and a leading voice for 21st-century art and culture. Part of the Smithsonian,

the Hirshhorn is located prominently on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Its holdings encompass one of the most important collections of postwar American and European art in the world. The Hirshhorn presents diverse exhibitions and offers an array of public programs on the art of our time—free to all, 364 days a year. For more information, visit hirshhorn.si.edu.

#

Image: Arthur Jafa, (film still) “Love Is The Message, The Message is Death,” 2016. Video, color and black-and-white, sound. Running time: 7:30 minutes. Courtesy of Arthur Jafa and Gavin Brown’s enterprise, New York/ Rome.