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**ALWAYS FRESH
ALWAYS FREE**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is pleased to present the first museum survey of the work of media art pioneer Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984).

*Stan VanDerBeek:
The Culture Intercom*
May 14 – July 10, 2011

Opening Reception
Friday, May 13, 2011
6-7PM: Member Preview
7-9PM: Public Reception



Stan VanDerBeek, *Breathdeath* (still), 1963. Courtesy the Estate of Stan VanDerBeek

HOUSTON, TX (May 9, 2011)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the MIT List Visual Arts Center present the first museum survey of the work of media art pioneer Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984). Surveying the artist's remarkable body of work in collage, experimental film, performance, participatory, and computer-generated art over several decades, *Stan VanDerBeek: The Culture Intercom* highlights the artist's pivotal contributions to today's media-based artistic practices. The exhibition features dozens of early paintings and collages, an exhaustive selection of his pioneering animations and films, re-creations of immersive projection and "expanded cinema" environments, documentation of site-specific and telecommunications projects, and material related to his performance and durational work.

Describing himself as a "technological fruit picker," VanDerBeek consistently turned to new technological means to expand the social and emotive potential of emergent technology and media. Emerging from the progressivist and intermedia tradition of Black Mountain College, VanDerBeek created technologically hybrid and participatory artworks through the 1960s and '70s. His early drawings and collages, heavily influenced by Dada and the expressionism of the Beat Generation, already hinted at the artist's interest in the

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transformation of perception and knowledge in an electronic age and the relationship between art, technology, and the human condition.

VanDerBeek's animations and short films, beginning in the late 1950s, made him a central figure in American underground film. Combining stop-motion animation drawn from collages of magazine illustrations and advertisements with filmed sequences and found footage, films such as *Achoo Mr. Kerrooshchev* (1960) and *Breathdeath* (1963) fused avant-garde cinematic techniques with social critique and Cold War politics.

VanDerBeek's interest shifted to "expanded cinema" and immersive and multimedia work in the mid-1960s. His *Movie-Drome* (1963-1965), an audiovisual laboratory and theater built in Stony Point, New York, was conceived as an environment to present multiple film projections. These so-called "movie-murals" were part of the artist's research into developing new visual languages that could be used as tools for world communication.

Always at the forefront of new information, communication, and visualization technologies, VanDerBeek readily embraced computer graphics, image-processing systems, and various new technological forms through the late 1960s and early '70s. At Bell Labs, working with the first moving-image programming language, he produced *Poemfields* (1966-1971), a series of computer-generated films. As a research fellow at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) and artist-in-residence at Boston's public television station WGBH, he began to develop new forms of interdisciplinary work and integrated forms of visual information that now stand as significant experiments in early new media art. For *Panels for the Walls of the World* (1970), developed and conceived at CAVS in 1969, VanDerBeek experimented with transmitting art over telephone using a Xerox machine called a "Telecopier." A mosaic-like mural of images would be composed in "real time," sent from his studio at MIT to any location in the world that had access to a telephone line and a similar machine, and then reordered on site.

Working with WGBH television, VanDerBeek produced *Violence Sonata* (1970), a mix of live studio television transmission and pre-recorded video work that questioned violence and race relations in America. VanDerBeek went on to conceive several complex cinematic and performance events at planetariums and museums before his untimely death in 1984.

Beginning with a selection of early abstract paintings, watercolors, and photographs the exhibition features a rotating three-hour program of more than a dozen of VanDerBeek's renowned animations, along with over forty of the existing collages from his films. The artist's series of computer-generated films, *Poemfields* (1966-1971), exploring early computer graphics and image-processing systems, are included as four multiple screen projections, along with *Variations V* (1965/66), VanDerBeek's multi-media collaboration with Merce Cunningham, John Cage, David Tudor, and Nam June Paik. The exhibition also re-creates two of VanDerBeek's significant works: *Movie Mural* (1968), a multimedia installation comprised of several slide and video projections, and a version of the large fax murals created at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies and the Walker Art Center in the early 1970s. Immersive, participatory, and media-based projects such as *Violence Sonata* (1970) and *Cine-Dreams* (1972) will be featured through rare footage, original drawings and texts, and extensive documentation.

Stan VanDerBeek: The Culture Intercom is organized by Bill Arning, Director, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; and João Ribas, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Stan VanDerBeek was born in New York, NY, 1927 and died in Baltimore, MD, in 1984. VanDerBeek studied at Cooper Union and Black Mountain College, receiving honorary doctorate degrees from Black Mountain College (1957) and Cooper Union, New York (1972). The artist's film work has been presented in numerous film festivals since 1967, including the Lincoln Center Film Festival, the London Film Festival, the Washington International Film Festival, and the New York International Film Festival. He was the recipient of many grant awards including several from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, and an American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker award. VanDerBeek collaborated with numerous organizations serving as a residency artist and researcher. These included television stations, universities, foundations, scientific laboratories, and government agencies among them: Bell Labs, CBS-TV, Boston's public television station WGBH, MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies, National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA), and the United States Information Agency (USIA). VanDerBeek taught at Columbia University (1963-65), State University of New York (SUNY) Stony Brook (1967-72), and University of South Florida (1972-75). From 1975 until his death in 1984, he was a

Professor of Art at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD.

Vanderbeek's work was included in the pioneering exhibitions *Cybernetic Serendipity*, Institute of Contemporary Art, (ICA) London, U.K., Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC (1968-69); *The Projected Image*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA (1968); and *Software*, The Jewish Museum, New York, NY (1970). His work was also included in the 1983 *Whitney Biennial* exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. In addition, VanDerBeek's work has been shown at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Kunsthau Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland; Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna Austria; the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; and the Museum of Modern Art, NY, among many others. His work can also be found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA; and The Arts Council of Great Britain, London, UK.

Stan VanDerBeek: The Culture Intercom has been organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and the MIT List Visual Arts Center.

PUBLICATION

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition. Through scholarly research on several facets of VanDerBeek's art practice, including the concept of "expanded cinema" and his contributions to media theory, the catalogue highlights the fusing of technology, film, performance, and multimedia that define VanDerBeek's place in the aesthetics of media art. Along with essays by the exhibition's two curators, the publication includes essays by contributing editor Mark Bartlett; Jacob Proctor, Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI; Gloria Sutton, Roski School of Fine Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA; and Michael Zryd, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Major Exhibition catalogues are made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

All events are free and open to the public, and take place at the Contemporary Arts Museum

Houston unless otherwise noted. For complete listings and current information, please check www.camh.org.

Artist's Talk: Sara VanDerBeek*

Tuesday, May 10, 7-8PM

**Special location: Freed Auditorium, Glassell School of Art, 5101 Montrose Blvd, Houston*

Sara VanDerBeek is the daughter of the late Stan VanDerBeek and an artist in her own right. Her semi-abstract photographs often depict three-dimensional still-life assemblages—incorporating objects, found images, and even her own pictures—that she creates in her studio and then photographs. Her work has been shown in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and SculptureCenter in New York. In 2010, VanDerBeek had a one-person show at the Whitney Museum of American Art, *Sara VanDerBeek: To Think of Time*. This lecture is cosponsored by the Core Program at the Glassell School of Art, CAMH, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Lecture: João Ribas*

Wednesday, May 11 7-8PM

**Special location: Freed Auditorium, Glassell School of Art, 5101 Montrose Blvd, Houston*

João Ribas, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center and co-curator of *Stan VanDerBeek: The Culture Intercom*, will discuss the exhibition. This lecture is cosponsored by the Core Program at the Glassell School of Art, CAMH, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Opening Reception: Stan VanDerBeek: The Culture Intercom

Friday, May 13

6-7PM: Members' Preview

CAMH Membership has its benefits! Join us for a special walk-through of the exhibition with **Sara VanDerBeek**, visual artist and daughter of the late Stan VanDerBeek, and the show's co-curators **Bill Arning**, CAMH Director, and **João Ribas**, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center. To become a member, go to www.camh.org.

7-9 PM: Public Reception

Help us celebrate the opening of the first museum survey of the work of media art pioneer Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984). The exhibition is co-organized by CAMH and MIT List Visual Arts Center. Reception with bar and food truck; cash only please.

Expanded Cinema at the Planetarium*

Saturday, May 14, 8PM, doors open at 7:30PM

**Special location: Burke Baker Planetarium, Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5555 Hermann Park Drive*

Join CAMH at Burke Baker Planetarium for a unique, multiple-projection planetarium event incorporating rarely seen, mind-expanding, experimental films made in the 1960s and early 1970s. This show evokes the cultural landscape as film/media artists of the era embraced multiplicity, combined art forms, and integrated new technologies to create immersive art experiences. In the planetarium's dome and under its starfield, we'll see Ronald Nameth's experimental document of Andy Warhol's 1967 multimedia *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* shows; the collaborative film/video manipulations of Nam June Paik and USCO artist Jud Yalkut; and early experiments in computer animation and motion graphics by John Whitney, Stan VanDerBeek, and Lillian Schwartz. Seating is limited; doors open at 7:30PM. This special program is co-presented by CAMH, Aurora Picture Show, and the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Film Curator: Peter Lucas, Education Associate, CAMH. *Special thanks to American Paper Optics for providing 3D glasses for films by Lillian Schwartz.*

Artists/Scholars Talk: Gloria Sutton
Thursday, June 2, 6:30PM

Gloria Sutton is a curator and art historian of Contemporary Art and New Media in the Art +Design Department at Northeastern University, Boston, MA. She is among the foremost experts on the work of Stan VanDerBeek and her original research into the artist and his times was the foundation upon which this exhibition was built. Sutton will discuss the artist in a visual arts context and the new insights into VanDerBeek's work that have emerged as a result of this exhibition being realized.

Artists/Scholars Talk: J. Pittman McGehee
Saturday, June 11, 2PM

Join us for a walk-through of the exhibition with **J. Pittman McGehee**, the Former Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, Diplomat Jungian analyst, and the Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Psychology and Spirituality. McGehee is a CAMH favorite guest speaker for always bringing a unique perspective to an exhibition.

Image Mixer

Thursday, June 16, 6:30-8:30PM

Artist? Or not? No matter. By the time you leave CAMH, you will be! Don't miss this FUN, informal evening of cocktails and collage. We'll provide drinks and an assortment of old books and magazines, cutting utensils, tape, and glue. You bring the powers of creative juxtaposition (and your own images if you want). All ages welcome. Held in the Cullen Education Resource Room, lower level of the Museum.

Artists/Scholars Talk: Bill Arning
Saturday, June 18, 2PM

Join us for a walk-through of *Stan VanDerBeek: The Culture Intercom* with **Bill Arning**, CAMH Director and curator of the exhibition.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Stan VanDerBeek: The Culture Intercom has been organized by Bill Arning, Director, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and João Ribas, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center, with special thanks to the Estate of Stan VanDerBeek and London-based independent scholar Mark Bartlett. The exhibition has been made possible by the generous support of the ART MENTOR FOUNDATION LUCERNE and The National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency, along with the Council for the Arts at MIT, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Union Pacific Foundation and Martin E. Zimmerman.

Exhibitions in the Brown Foundation Gallery at CAMH have been made possible by the patrons, benefactors and donors to the Museum's Major Exhibition Fund: Major Patron - Chinhui Juhn and Eddie Allen, Fayez Sarofim, and Michael Zilkha. Patrons - Louise D. Jamail, Mr. and Mrs. I. H. Kempner III, Ms. Louisa Stude Sarofim, and Leigh and Reggie Smith. Benefactors - Baker Botts L.L.P. / Anne and David Kirkland, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, Jackson Hicks / Jackson and Company, Marley Lott, Poppi Massey, Beverly and Howard Robinson, Andrew Schirrmeister, Susan Vaughan Foundation, Inc., and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Wilson. Donors - A Fare Extraordinaire, Anonymous, Anonymous, Bergner and Johnson Design, The Brown Foundation, Inc., Jereann Chaney, Susie and Sanford Criner, Elizabeth Howard Crowell, Sara Dodd-Spickelmier and Keith Spickelmier, Ruth Dreessen and Thomas Van Laan, Marita and J.B. Fairbanks, Jo and Jim Furr, Barbara and Michael Gamson, Brenda and William Goldberg / Bernstein Global Wealth Management, King & Spalding L.L.P., KPMG, LLP, Judy and Scott Nyquist, David I. Saperstein, Scurlock Foundation, and Karen and Harry Susman.

EDUCATION SUPPORT

The Museum receives support for its education programs from: Anonymous, Baker Hughes Foundation, Ruth Dreessen and Thomas Van Laan, Louise D. Jamail, John P. McGovern Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. I.H. Kempner III, Kinder Morgan Foundation, Leticia Loya, Andrew R. McFarland, M.D. Anderson Foundation, Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment, Mrs. Louisa Stude Sarofim, and 20K Group, LLC.

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GENERAL SUPPORT

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CAMH’s operations and programs are made possible through the generosity of the Museum’s trustees, patrons, members, and donors. CAMH receives partial operating support from the Houston Endowment, the City of Houston through the Houston Museum District Association, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and The Wortham Foundation, Inc.

United is the official airline of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

CAMH MISSION

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is an idea and a place shaped by the present moment. The Museum exemplifies the dynamic relationship between contemporary art and contemporary society through its exhibitions, public and educational programs, and publications. The CAMH provides the physical and intellectual framework essential to the presentation, interpretation, and advancement of contemporary art; it is a vibrant forum for artists and all audiences, and for critical, scholarly, and public discourse.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston’s Museum District. Hours are Wednesday 11AM-7PM, Thursday 11AM-9PM, Friday 11AM-7PM, Saturday and Sunday 11AM-6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit www.camh.org or call 713 284 8250.