

Exhibition

**DARA BIRNBAUM:  
THE DARK MATTER OF MEDIA LIGHT**

26<sup>th</sup> March – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010

**Curators: Philippe Van Cauteren and Giel Vandecaveye (SMAK); João Fernandes and Paula Fernandes, Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art**

**Co-production: SMAK (Gent) and Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art**

**Press presentation: 25th March, 11h30**

**Opening: 26th March, 22h00**

Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art presents the exhibition **The Dark Matter of Media Light**, by the American artist **Dara Birnbaum** (New York, 1946). Birnbaum's provocative video works are among the most influential and innovative contributions to the contemporary discourse on art and television.

Dara Birnbaum started making art that was politically and critically relevant in the mid-1970s. Her work today is as contemporary and up-to-date as it was in the 1970s when she questioned society with her first video works. For more than 30 years Birnbaum has been provoking questions as to the way we look at political events, and how we are influenced and manipulated by images, television and the media in general. Today we are still searching for our place between such different digital phenomena as Facebook, Netlog and Twitter.

In her videotapes and multi-media installations, Birnbaum applies both low and high-end video technology to subvert, critique or deconstruct the power of mass media images and gestures to define mythologies of culture, history and memory. Through a dynamic tele-visual language of images, music and text, she exposes the media's embedded ideological meanings and posits video as a means of giving voice to the individual.

Previous major retrospective exhibitions of Birnbaum's work have been presented at the Kunsthalle Wien, Austria and the Norrtälje Konsthall, Sweden. Retrospective screenings include The American Film Institute, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.; Kunsthaus, Zurich and Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland. She has also exhibited in: documenta VII, VIII and IX, as well as numerous Venice Biennales. Solo international exhibitions of her work include: The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, and The Jewish Museum, New York; IVAM, Valencia; and the Musee d'Art Contemporain, Montreal.

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**SERRALVES**

International group exhibitions include: the Bienal de Valencia; the Biennial of Seoul 'media\_city seoul 2000', the Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Tate Gallery, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland; S.M.A.K., Gent, Belgium; Museo Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Castello di Rivoli, Torino, Italy; Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland; Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona, Spain; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; National Museum of Art – EMST, Athens, Greece; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, amongst many other well-known international institutions.

Birnbaum was the first video artist to receive the American Film Institute's prestigious Maya Deren Award for Independent Film and Video, in 1987. Other International Film and Video Awards include: Festival International de la Video at des Arts Electroniques, Locarno, TV Picture Prize; Chicago International Film Festival; Videonale, Bonn; the San Sebastian Film Festival; Südwestfunk Television and ZKM, Karlsruhe, Deutsche Videokunstpreis, Special Jury Prize; and the National Endowment for the Arts, amongst others.

Dara Birnbaum is represented by the Marian Goodman Gallery, NYC and Paris and Wilkinson Gallery, London. She is currently on the Advisory Council of IMAP (Independent Media Arts Preservation, based in New York), whose function is to ensure the preservation of independent electronic media for cultural and educational use by future generations. She will be honoured in May, 2009, by Rhizome at the New Museum, New York. Rhizome supports the creation, presentation, and preservation of contemporary art that uses new technology in significant ways. Birnbaum lives in New York City.

For additional information, please contact our press office:

**Marta Morais**

[m.morais@serralves.pt](mailto:m.morais@serralves.pt)

+ 351 226 156 572

**Sandra Olim**

[s.olim@serralves.pt](mailto:s.olim@serralves.pt)

+ 351 226 156 579