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MoMA Commissions Artists to Create Multichannel Videos for Lobby Screens

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NEW YORK, NY (AP).- [The Museum of Modern Art](#) presents 9 Screens, an exhibition consisting of five new multichannel videos commissioned specifically for the information screens located above the admission desk in the Museum's lobby, from February 3 to May 18, 2010.

The concept for the exhibition was developed during conversations between artist Nicolas Guagnini and Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director, The Museum of Modern Art, about MoMA's interchange with artists—how the Museum was perceived by artists, and also its function and role within the artistic community. In 2008, Halbreich invited Guagnini to observe the inner workings of MoMA and share his observations and critiques with both curators and administrators.

Halbreich says, "I was impressed with the program of exhibitions and lectures at Orchard, a cooperative gallery Nicolas founded in 2005 with a group of colleagues. The idea behind Orchard was to increase the connection between audience and artist, to operate to the side of the art market, and to display under-recognized works, often of a conceptual and political nature, across generations. I thought these ideas would be a good jumping-off point to start a project with Nicolas for MoMA."

After several months of discussion with curatorial and administrative staff, Guagnini articulated some of the challenges he perceived were central to MoMA becoming both a more nimble institution and one less



John Pilson (American, 1968), "Frolic and Detour". Digital video, 12 minutes, color, silent.
Onview April 7 – April 26, 2010

constrained by the canonical history it had contributed to shaping. For example, he thought that MoMA needed to expand its entry point for young, local artists. He also talked about the viability of using more of the interstitial spaces of the Museum as sites for additional display as well as how to compress the long lead time required by large institutions to realize an exhibition. He identified the nine information screens located above the ticket desk as a site to experiment with this idea, noting that the screens' inside/outside

position—hovering above the space where the initial contact between audience and institution occurs, yet also visible from the street—made them a unique site of exchange between the Museum and the public.

In conversation with Klaus Biesenbach, Director of P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and MoMA's Chief Curator at Large, and Luis Enrique Pérez-Oramas, MoMA's Estrellita Brodsky Curator of Latin American Art, Guagnini selected a group of artists for MoMA to commission to create new works for the nine screens. Guagnini states, "By choosing several other local, New York-based artists that have not shown at MoMA before, I imagined harnessing as well as disrupting this very visible apparatus for institutional display."

The emphasis of the project was to learn from the artists as they spent time at MoMA and, in turn, for the artists to see how MoMA worked. In addition to starting an animated conversation about institutional behavior and expanding transparency, the project has resulted in five works of art that successfully occupy the nine screens, in and of itself a difficult task. By exchanging information for art, a different sort of experience greets every ticket buyer.

The New York-based artists and collectives participating in the exhibition are Fia Backström, Alejandro Cesarco, Bernadette Corporation, John Pilson, and Union Gaucha Productions (which Guagnini cofounded). The artists were selected because, while they represent a range of sensibilities, each tends to work with a mutated narrative form appropriate for the nine screens. Several also were particularly interested in drawing imagery from the way the Museum works. The videos run between 12 minutes and over 3 hours in length, and cover a range of style and content, from what happens in the non-exhibition spaces of the Museum to a day in the life of a lawyer. Each video will be shown on a continuous loop for a three-week duration during the run of the exhibition.