



GENERAL IDEA

Video Screening

Introduced by AA Bronson



Wednesday, March 10, 2010
6:30 pm

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)
535 West 22nd Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10011
www.eai.org

Admission free
Please RSVP: info@eai.org

Please join EAI for a screening of works by groundbreaking art collective **General Idea**. EAI will screen three videos from the late 1970s and early '80s: *Test Tube* (1979), *Loco* (1982) and *Shut the Fuck Up* (1984). AA Bronson, a founding member of General Idea, will introduce the screening and participate in a post-screening Q&A with the audience.

Formed in Toronto in 1969, the artist collective General Idea — AA Bronson, Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal — generated an influential body of work that included video, performance, photography, installations, publications and a range of other distributed media. In their distinctive videos, General Idea often took on and parodied television, hacking into its toolbox of genres, tactics and formats to deliver witty, ironic critiques of the art world and celebrity-fueled popular culture. Their politically potent videos harnessed TV as a vehicle for media activism, exploring social phenomena ranging from the production, distribution and consumption of mass media images to gay identity and the AIDS crisis.

Collapsing the boundaries between popular culture and fine art was a major focus of General Idea's conceptual practice and connects the three works screened at EAI. The 1979 video *Test Tube* was conceived as a program for television. Presented under the brand "The Color Bar Lounge," a cocktail bar in the mythical 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion, the program is a hybrid of popular television formats, including talk show, soap opera, news magazine, and infomercial. *Loco* is a reflection on the role of General Idea's formative creation and muse, "Miss General Idea." In *Loco*, clips salvaged from a purported 1968 film showing glimpses of Miss General Idea are interspersed with images of Bronson, Zontal and Partz dressed as poodles (a recurring General Idea motif) and meditating in nature. Finally, General Idea's classic video *Shut the Fuck Up* juxtaposes material from television and film of the 1960s, including historic footage of Yves Klein's painting and performance from the film *Mondo Cane*, with documentation of the collective's own 1984 performance *XXX blue*, which saw the artists painting on canvas using stuffed poodles dipped in chroma-key blue paint. A quote from Felix Partz explains the essence of their critique: "Those who live to please, must please to live."

General Idea worked together from 1969 until the deaths of Partz and Zontal in 1994. AA Bronson was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 1946. He works independently as an artist, and has been widely exhibited. Felix Partz was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in 1945. Jorge Zontal was born in Parma, Italy in 1944.

General Idea's video works have been exhibited and broadcast internationally for the last 40 years, including Projects Video VIII at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1976); the Paris Biennale (1977); Stedelijk Museum,

(over)

Amsterdam (1979); Canadian Pavilion, Venice Biennale (1980); Documenta 7, Kassel (1982); *General Idea Retrospective* at International Festival du Nouveau Cinema, Montreal (1985); *Video as Television*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (1989); *Videotapes by General Idea*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (1993); *General Idea*, World Wide Video Center, The Hague (1994); *Video Acts*, PS1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City (2002); *Changing Channels*, MUMOK, Vienna (2010). General Idea's videos have been broadcast internationally since 1977, and have been awarded the Portopia Award (1981), The Bell Canada Award in Video Art (2001), The Governor General's Visual Art and Media Award (2002), and the Skowhegan Medal in Multi Media (2006).

For more information about General Idea's videos, please visit: www.eai.org

About EAI: Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is one of the world's leading nonprofit resources for video art. A pioneering advocate for media art and artists, EAI's core program is the distribution and preservation of a major collection of over 3,500 new and historical media works by artists. EAI fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution and preservation of video art and digital art. EAI's activities include a preservation program, viewing access, educational services, extensive online resources, and public programs such as artists' talks, exhibitions and panels. The Online Catalogue is a comprehensive resource on the artists and works in the EAI collection, and also features extensive materials on exhibiting, collecting and preserving media art:

www.eai.org

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

