



*A Fire in My Belly* (see full caption below)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Light Work, 316 Waverly Avenue, Syracuse 13244  
Contact: Jessica H. Reed  
315.443.1300, [jhreed01@syr.edu](mailto:jhreed01@syr.edu)  
[www.lightwork.org](http://www.lightwork.org)

Lecture Announcement

## **Jonathan Katz—*Ending the Loud Silence: Hide/Seek the Future of Queer Exhibitions and Freedom of Speech***

**February 7, 2011, 6:00pm**

**Watson Auditorium**

Light Work, Hendricks Chapel, and the LGBT Resource Center are pleased to announce a lecture by Jonathan Katz, co-curator of the important Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery exhibition *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*. Co-curated by Katz and David C. Ward, this monumental exhibition is the first to focus on sexual difference in the making of modern American portraiture. The exhibition has been praised for its groundbreaking scholarship by a major museum and has drawn international attention when a video in the exhibition by David Wojnarowicz was censored and removed from the exhibition under pressure from a right wing religious group and conservative politicians.

The exhibition considers such themes as the role of sexual difference in depicting modern America; how artists explored the fluidity of sexuality and gender; how major themes in modern art—especially abstraction—were influenced by social marginalization; and how art reflected society's evolving and changing attitudes toward sexuality, desire, and romantic attachment. According to Blake Gopnik of *The Washington Post*, the exhibition features a "...fascinating world, and powerful art..." He goes on to state that, "Scholars Jonathan Katz and David Ward have mounted one of the best thematic exhibitions in years." According to Holland Cotter of *The New York Times*, "With the exhibition *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, one of our federally funded museums, the National Portrait Gallery, here in the city of 'don't ask, don't tell,' has gone where our big private museums apparently dare not tread, deep into the history of art by and about gay artists."

The exhibition attracted international attention when Wojnarowicz's video *A Fire in My Belly* was censored and removed from the exhibition by G. Wayne Clough, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, after receiving complaints from William Donohue, president of the Catholic League as well as John Boehner, Republican Speaker of the House, and Eric Cantor, Republican Majority Leader. The removal of the video from the exhibition has sparked public outcry from arts organizations and activists around the world, including the Tate Modern in London, the Whitney Museum and MOMA in New York City, and SF MOMA in San Francisco, among many others. Light Work joined these protests in early December by organizing a screening of *Fire in My Belly* on December 14 in collaboration with the ArtRage Gallery, which included a public forum about the work. Light Work will continue to show the video until February 13, the date the exhibition is scheduled to close in Washington, DC.

Light Work presents this event as an opportunity for Katz to discuss the process of curating this important exhibition, its significance, as well as the controversy surrounding the entire exhibition and Wojnarowicz's video. In addition, there will be a question-and-answer session with Katz and audience members through which Light Work hopes to continue the dialogue about this exhibition, censorship, and the controversy.

Jonathan Katz, a scholar of post war art and culture from the vantage point of sexuality, is an associate professor and director of the visual studies doctoral program at SUNY Buffalo, as well as honorary research faculty at the University of Manchester, UK; and a guest curator at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery. Known as an activist academic, Katz was the founding director of the Larry Kramer Initiative for Lesbian and Gay Studies at Yale University—the first queer studies program in the Ivy League—and founding chair of the very first Department of Gay and Lesbian Studies in the United States, at City College of San Francisco in 1990. He co-founded the activist group Queer Nation, San Francisco, and the San Francisco National Queer Arts Festival, and founded the Queer Caucus of the College Art Association. David C. Ward is a historian of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

The website <http://hideseek.org> offers an archive of information about the censorship of *A Fire in My Belly* as well as a growing list of arts institutions that are hosting events and screenings in support of Wojnarowicz and freedom of artistic expression.

Limited free parking for this event is available in Booth Garage—please RSVP to Light Work (315-443-1300). The event is free and open to the public. Gallery hours to view the video are Sunday to Friday, 10am–6pm, and by appointment. To schedule an appointment, please call 315-443-1300. Light Work is closed during school holidays.

Light Work invites groups and individuals to schedule tours and gallery talks of the facility. Light Work is a non-profit, artist-run organization dedicated to the support of artists working in photography and electronic media. Light Work is a member of CMAC, the Coalition of Museum and Art Centers at Syracuse University.

For more information, please contact Jessica H. Reed at Light Work, 315-443-1300 or [jhreed01@syr.edu](mailto:jhreed01@syr.edu).

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**Full Caption Information (MUST accompany images):**

David Wojnarowicz, *A Fire In My Belly (Film In Progress)* and *A Fire In My Belly Excerpt*, 1986-87  
Super 8mm film transferred to video (black and white and color, silent), 13:06 min. and 7:00 min. Courtesy of The Estate of David Wojnarowicz and P.P.O.W Gallery, New York and The Fales Library and Special Collections/ New York University.