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DAVID WOJNAROWICZ'S *A FIRE IN MY BELLY* ON VIEW AT THE NEW MUSEUM THROUGH JANUARY 23, 2011

New York, New York...**David Wojnarowicz's *A Fire in My Belly*** is now on view at the New Museum through January 23, 2011. David Wojnarowicz is a widely respected artist whose first U.S. retrospective was held at the New Museum in 1999. The film, ***A Fire in My Belly, A Work in Progress*** (1986-87) is a poetic meditation on man, life, death, faith, and suffering made in part as a response to the AIDS-related death of his close friend, artist Peter Hujar. In the 13-minute silent film, Wojnarowicz juxtaposes informal black and white footage from the streets of Mexico with staged color images in a rough montage. After Wojnarowicz's own untimely death from AIDS in 1992, a separate seven-minute version was found in his studio. A four-minute excerpt was created from the original 13-minute film for inclusion in the exhibition "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture," at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C., which opened on October 30, 2010.

One month later, Catholic League president Bill Donohue called the work an act of "hate speech" against Christians, and began to pressure the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to reconsider funding for the Smithsonian. In response to this uninformed misreading of the work and mounting pressure, the work was removed from the exhibition on November 30, 2010.

The New Museum is screening David Wojnarowicz's original work, followed by the seven-minute version, in its Lobby as an act of solidarity with the many artists whose rights of expression continue to be limited by misinformation and fear. "The New Museum has always defended freedom of expression and continues to oppose censorship. We cannot afford to take hard won civil liberties for granted and need to remain vigilant and protect artistic freedom," said Lisa Phillips, *Toby Devan Lewis Director*.

David Wojnarowicz

A Fire in My Belly, A Work in Progress (1986-87)

Super 8mm film transferred to DVD

TRT: 13 minutes

Excerpt: 7 minutes

Courtesy of the Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University, the Estate of David Wojnarowicz, and P.P.O.W Gallery, New York

About the New Museum

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum was conceived as a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding, dedicated, SANAA-designed building on the Bowery in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a hub of new art and new ideas and is a place of ongoing experimentation about what art and arts institutions can be in the twenty-first century.

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