

## Black Box

From 2010 to 2011, a black box space for film and video was created in the Robert and Joan Feitler Gallery to highlight this key medium for contemporary artistic expression. The presented works were mostly connected to Smart exhibitions past and present: *Waterway (Chicago to Utica)* by Dan Peterman, MFA'86, was commissioned as part of *Heartland* (2008-2009), while Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla's *Returning a Sound*, was featured in our groundbreaking 2005 exhibition *Beyond Green*. Faculty member Jason Salavon's *Everything All at Once (Part III)*, pictured at right, was shown in vivid counterpoint to his Digital Cave on view simultaneously in *Echoes of the Past*, and UChicago students considered Kader Attia's *Oil and Sugar* as part of the *Food for Thought* course taught in conjunction with *Feast*. Each work was accompanied by a comment book in which visitors recorded thoughts and questions.

The flexibility of the space allowed us to respond quickly to external events. In 2010, an excerpt of the 1986-87 film *A Fire in My Belly* by David Wojnarowicz was removed from the National Portrait Gallery exhibition *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* following protests by a religious group and conservative politicians. In response to the Smithsonian's decision to pull the work, institutions around the country hosted screenings as a way to draw attention to its removal and spur discussion around the film and issues of censorship. The Smart also worked with art history PhD student Jenn Sichel—who had served as a research assistant for *Hide/Seek*—to gather a group of eminent scholars for a lively public debate on Wojnarowicz and issues surrounding the work, including first amendment rights, the arts and public policy, and issues of gender and sexuality. In an interview with *Bad At Sports Contemporary Art Talk*, director Anthony Hirschel stated that the Smart “is committed to providing access to important works and to fostering discussion around even the most challenging art. This presentation gives our audiences the opportunity to discuss and judge its merits for themselves.”

And visitors had an overwhelmingly positive response to the film. As Hannah Berson, AB'05, wrote in the comment book for *A Fire in My Belly*: “I take great heart in the fact that institutions across the country are showing the work in concert. I am particularly proud that the Smart Museum—somewhere I spent many a day wandering before or after classes—is part of this.”



### ON VIEW

#### February–August 2010

Jennifer Allora, American, b. 1974  
Guillermo Calzadilla, Cuban, b. 1971  
*Returning a Sound*, 2004, Single channel video projection with sound, 5 minutes, 41 seconds

#### September 29–November 7, 2010

Jason Salavon, American, b. 1970  
*Everything, All at Once (Part III)*, 2005-2010, Custom software, workstation, real-time audio/video input, video projector, monitor

#### November 1–28, 2010

Paul Emmanuel, South African, b. 1969  
*3SA: A Rite of Passage*, 2008, High-definition digital video with sound, 14:00 minutes.

#### January 4–February 6, 2011

David Wojnarowicz, American, 1954-1992  
*A Fire In My Belly (Film In Progress)*, 1986-87, Super 8mm film, black and white & color, Silent.

#### February 8–April 17, 2011

Kader Attia, French and Algerian, b. 1970  
*Oil and Sugar #2*, 2008  
Projection from digital media

#### April 28–June 19, 2011

Dan Peterman, American, b. 1960  
*Waterway (Chicago to Utica)*, 2008, High-definition digital video (color, sound, 1:20)  
Commissioned by Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

