

We the People

But just who are the American people? Are we easily split into red and blue ideological camps? Can our identities be distilled into the pollster-generated categories of Soccer Moms, Latte Liberals, NPR Republicans, America First Democrats, and the Facebook Generation? Can we be neatly polarized along the lines of “takers” versus “makers”? Can the population be accounted for in solely statistical terms: the 99 and the 1 percent? Or the 47 percent of Americans who don't pay federal income taxes and the 53 percent who do?

Against the backdrop of this year's presidential election, this exhibition seeks to explore issues related to American identity politics and question the role that demographics play in our political process. Elections are won and lost on the battlefield of the pollster; success depends on how the candidates (as well as the special interests that fund them) strategically court swing voters, ethnic groups, socio-economic voting blocs, and other perceived constituencies.

Using the famous first words of the U.S. Constitution as a starting point, this exhibition brings together a deliberately eclectic range of figurative paintings and sculptures. This visually cacophonous ensemble is intended to form a conjunctural portrait of the American populace. While this national panorama is inevitably an incomplete depiction of contemporary America, the wide range of periods, styles, and subjects chosen for the exhibition is intended to counter the inadequate demographic portrait of the current electorate. By foreground-

ing images of people replete with individualism, ambiguity, sociological nuance, and diversity, *We the People* attempts to circumvent the clichés and oversimplified trends that inform the presidential campaigns. Featuring some sixty works, this diverse ensemble of people questions the reductive nature of the demographic gaming behind the American political system.

We the People also pays homage to the long and varied history of politically engaged art in America, beginning here with examples of the Social Realism movement of the 1930s (exemplified by works by Ben Shahn and Margaret Bourke-White) and continuing with various contemporary examples of politically motivated artists. The exhibition also includes artists whose work is not typically labeled “political art,” but which, in this context, takes on a distinct socio-political meaning.

We the People is curated by Alison Gingeras and Jonathan Horowitz.

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG PROJECT SPACE
455 West 19th Street New York, NY 10011

Open Tuesday – Saturday 11:00 am – 6:00 pm

212-228-5283
rauschenbergfoundation.com

Free Admission

WE THE PEOPLE PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Over the course of the exhibition, the Rauschenberg Foundation will host several public programs, panel discussions, and lectures that engage with and elaborate on the show's themes. Precise details will be available on the foundation's website: www.rauschenbergfoundation.org.

We the People on TV
An evening with Norman Lear
Monday, October 8
5:00 – 7:00 pm

Understanding USA
A conversation with Richard Saul Wurman
Friday, October 19
10:00 – 11:30 am

American Voices
An evening of poetry
Hosted by Jeff Gordinier, *New York Times*
Tuesday, October 23
5:00 – 7:00 pm

We the People TV

Politicians and American television networks collect and utilize demographic information in a similar way. Mainstream media and national candidates use their demographic assessments of the American populace as a means to tailor their messages, woo certain groups, and project idealized representations or subjects. In both spheres, viewers and voters are imaginary populations. But even as a demographically engineered construction, these viewer-voters have power if TV ratings and votes are now equal in American identity politics.

The media component of *We the People* examines this parallel between television audiences and electoral constituencies by exploring the fantasy of watching TV as a form of citizenship. Titled *We the People TV*, this video channel uses the paradigm of the mainstream broadcast television schedule to create an original week of programming. Each day begins with religious programs, then a magazine-style talk show, and continues to follow the conventions of the old-school broadcast television schedule. Since the flow of TV is always interrupted by commercials and other interstitial material, *We the People TV* includes some iconic examples of these interruptions, and adds into the mix landmark works from video art's long history of questioning the relationship between media and democracy.

In mixing popular television shows with film and video made by artists, *We the People TV* offers an impossible, emblematic, and somewhat utopian daily broadcast of our media citizenship. Works of activist art that address the contradictions

Rauschenberg

Robert Rauschenberg formed his foundation in 1990 to promote awareness of the causes and support the organizations close to his heart. The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation seeks to further the artist's philanthropic and educational initiatives, and aims to preserve and advance global understanding of the legacy of his life and artwork. The foundation's vision, mission, and strategy are coordinated to promote the artist's values and to ensure that all endeavors express the essence of Rauschenberg's philosophy: "Art can change the world."

Given the resonance with Rauschenberg's own artistic and philanthropic legacy, it is fitting that *We the People* will inaugurate the foundation's project space. As Rauschenberg said in his testimony before Congress in 1987, "Democracy is not the product of law; democracy is the need of people to be free in dreams and reality. Controversy is part of creation, and changes are essential to current survival nationally, and therefore internationally. The doors of control should be broad-minded and wise with experience, compassion, and understanding. This, without a doubt, must be the history of the future." Exploring how one characterizes the American fabric is relevant to understanding the voice and representation of the people—this political philosophy is as much a part of Rauschenberg's legacy as his work as a visual artist.

of media are embedded in a television flow composed of programs, corporate public relations advertisements, campaign commercials, civil rights Public Service Announcements, historical news broadcasts, and other exemplary material from television history. With this eclectic amalgamation of demographic imagery, *We the People TV* proposes that the history of American television is more than pop culture ephemera—it is also a portrait of the complexities and contradictions of American identity. Viewers who sample this five-day video program will find their attention turning to the relationship between representation on television and representation in the political sphere, and tuning into the political frequencies of American media culture.

We the People TV is curated by Alison Gingeras, Jonathan Horowitz, and Anna McCarthy.

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation thanks the artists and organizations that granted permission to reproduce the works that appear on this poster. In order of appearance, from left to right: Norman Rockwell, *Four Freedoms - Freedom of Worship*, 1943. Norman Rockwell Museum Collection ©1943 SEPS; Shirin Neshat, *Muhammad*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels; Philip-Lorca diCorcia, *Eddie Anderson: 21 years old*, Houston, Texas; \$20, 1990-92. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York; Jaume Plensa, *Quick-to-Smelly*, Celebrate 40,000 Years of American Art, 1995. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchase with funds from The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation 2000.191. Photograph by Robert Gerhardt. Courtesy of the artist; Andy Warhol, *Ladies and Gentlemen*, 1975. Private Collection. © 2012 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.; Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Cady Noland, *LA Group # 1*, 1990. 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Gift of Sean Callahan 92.58. Photograph by Robert Gerhardt; Margaret Bourke-White *Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images*; Richard Phillips, *Vote Kirk Romney*, 2012. Courtesy of Richard Phillips Studio and Gagosian Gallery. Photography by Robert McKeever; LeRoy Neiman, *Minuteman*, 2002. Courtesy of the LeRoy Neiman Foundation; Swoon, *NeaNea*, 2012. Courtesy the artist; Martha Rosler, *Gladiators*, 2004. Courtesy the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY; Tom of Finland, *Untitled*, 1964. Tom of Finland Foundation and Feature Inc., New York; Brian Calvin, *Head With Stuff (Can With Hand)*, 2009. © the artist. Courtesy Anton Kern Gallery, New York; Robert Bechtle, *Aqua Caliente Nova*, 1975. High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ray M. and Mary Elizabeth Lee Foundation, 1978.1. Image courtesy the artist; Elia Troiano, *Wagnarcow, Untitled (One Day This Kid...)*, 1988-89 / 2010. 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Courtesy of Third Streaming (NY) and the Alvin Baltrop Trust; Robert Rauschenberg, *Signs*, 1970. The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. © The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Licensed through VAGA, New York, NY; Norman Rockwell, *Four Freedoms - Freedom of Speech*, 1943. Norman Rockwell Museum Collection ©1943 SEPS; Ben Shahn, *Man*, 1946. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Gift of Mr. & Mrs. E. Pows Jones. Art © Ben Shahn/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY; Bettye Saar, *Mother and Child in Blue*, 1968. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee 2000.46. Photograph by Robert Gerhardt. Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY

We the People TV

Campaign ads for the 2012 presidential election appear throughout the programming. Additional political interruptions from television history include Bill Clinton on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, New Gingrich interviewed by Al G. rare news footage from the civil rights era, Joseph McCarthy on Edward R. Murrow's *See It Now*, Captain Kirk kissing Lieutenant Uhura, Calista Flockhart kissing Lucy Liu, and Sarah Silverman's *The Great Schlep*.

	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00	5:30
TUE	You Can Change the World (1954) The Christophers bring Catholicism into the mainstream with their message of anti-communist individualism, voiced in this episode by the clergy, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and William Holden.	The Mike Douglas Show with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Day 1 (1972) On this first day of a weeklong visit to the show, guests John Lennon and Yoko Ono give the audience a peek into their lives, their love, and their independent projects. Featuring Ralph Nader and Louis Nye. Musical performances by John & Yoko with Elephants Memory, Mike with Joe Hamell & Band, and The Chambers Brothers.			Amos and Andy (1955) Madame Queen wins a television contest and becomes a pawn in a get-rich-quick scheme devised by Andy and the Kingfish.	Four More Years (1972) Radical documentarians Top Value Television cover the Republican Convention in 1972, the first year that teenagers were allowed to vote. Featuring Richard Nixon, Pat Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Walter Cronkite, and Mike Wallace.			Female Sensibility (1973) In this video work by Lynda Benglis, two women kiss and caress each other in tight closeup, as the distracting sounds of AM radio play on the audio track.	All in the Family (1977) When Edith learns of her cousin Liz's death, Archie urges her to claim some family heirlooms. Edith discovers something about Liz's relationship with her roommate that puts a stop to his plans.	Political Advertisement VII: 1952-2008 (2008) Antonio Muntadas and Marshall Reese compile political advertisements in an ongoing work that explores the iconography of American electioneering.		Will and Grace (1999) Rosario is threatened with deportation, so Karen, reluctant to find a new maid, schemes to keep her in the country by having her marry Jack.	Plymouth News Caravan (1954) The events of the day, brought to you by your news anchor and the Plymouth automobile company.
WED	The 700 Club (2011) In this episode of the Fundamentalist Christian talk show, a beauty queen discusses her faith and a woman raised by Satanists shares her experiences.	The Mike Douglas Show with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Day 2 (1972) On their second day co-hosting with Mike, John and Yoko talk with controversial anti-war activist Jerry Rubin. Featuring Barbara Loden. Musical performances by John & Yoko with Elephants Memory, Mike with Joe Hamell & Band, and Yellow Pearl.			Political Advertisement VII: 1952-2008 (2008) Antonio Muntadas and Marshall Reese compile political advertisements in an ongoing work that explores the iconography of American electioneering.			The Mary Tyler Moore Show (1970) Mary has a new pal, Joezie, but the friendship sours when Joezie makes anti-semitic comments about Rhoda.	Mauve (1974) "Mauve's Dilemma" Part I: Forty-nine year old Mauve becomes pregnant and contemplates having an abortion, a recently legalized procedure in New York State.	Mauve (1974) "Mauve's Dilemma" Part II: In the conclusion to this controversial episode, Mauve decides what to do about her unplanned pregnancy.	The Cosby Show (1984) Clair needs to fit into her dress for a benefit at the hospital where Cliff works, so she turns to a crash diet and an extreme workout regimen.	A Simple Case for Torture (or How to Sleep at Night) (1983) Martha Rosler portrays her massive cloning life as evidence of the vice mainstream U.S. print media legitimizes the use of torture in the service of state power and economic gain.	CBS News (1968) Extensive coverage of clashes between police and protesters at the Chicago Democratic Convention, plus news from Vietnam and Guatemala.	
THU	Crosstalk (2011) In this episode of a series produced by Jews for Jesus, we learn about the movement's take on the holidays.	The Mike Douglas Show with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Day 3 (1972) For their third day on the show, John and Yoko present a music-focused episode. John is united with his boyhood idol, Chuck Berry, and together with Yoko, they host a cooking segment. Featuring Joseph Belfiore, Hilary Rockefeller, David Rosenbom. Musical performances by John & Yoko with Elephants Memory, Mike with Joe Hamell & Band.			I Love Lucy (1952) Lucy gets jealous when Ricky reunites with an old dance partner to promote the White House's "Good Neighbor Policy" in Latin America.	Your Kunst Is My Waffen (1994) In this Lower East Side classic, director Ela Troyano takes us through the trials and tribulations of Cuban American performance artist Carmelita Tropicana, who endures them with hilarity.	The Snooters Brothers Comedy Hour (1968) This episode includes a scene, originally cut by CBS, in which Harry Belafonte sings "Don't Stop the Carnival" against a backdrop of images of police violence from the 1968 Democratic Convention.	Political Advertisement VII: 1952-2008 (2008) Antonio Muntadas and Marshall Reese compile political advertisements in an ongoing work that explores the iconography of American electioneering.		The United States v. Tim DeChristopher (2004) Artist Andrea Bowers visits the plots of land that imprisoned activist Tim deChristopher purchased at an illegal federal auction of Native American land.	All American Girl (1994) Margaret (Margaret Cho) defies her strict Korean-American mother and threatens to move in with her new boyfriend, until dad steps in to save the day.	The Simpsons (1995) Lisa decides to become a vegetarian after visiting a petting zoo, but her family and peers won't take her seriously. Paul and Linda McCartney guest star.	ABC News (1972) Harry Reasoner and Harry K. Smith report on the presidential election.	
FRI	The Atheist Experience (2012) An episode of a long-running cable access show produced in Austin, Texas, and sponsored by a nonprofit organization serving the local atheist community.	The Mike Douglas Show with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Day 4 (1972) On day four, John and Yoko and Mike Douglas invite Bobby Seale, leader of the Black Panther Party, onto the stage for a discussion. Featuring Martha Martin, Donald Williams, Vivian Reed, the Ace Trucking Company. Musical performances by John & Yoko with Elephants Memory, Mike with Joe Hamell & Band.			The Dan Smoot Report (1965) A syndicated right wing news and opinion program from the Cold War years.	New Report (2005-07) Artists K8 Hardy and Wynne Greenwood become news reporters for station WKRH, "Impregnant with information." In order to provide news that we all really can use.	Production Notes: Fast Food for Thought (1987) In this video by Jason Simon, 1980s, including ads for McDonald's, Mars bars, Pepsi, and other companies, plays in slow motion. A voiceover reads the production notes drawn up by the advertising agencies for the commercials' producers.	Good Times (1974) Florida is out of town when both J.J. and James learn that they are going to lose their jobs. To help support the family, J.J. tries to join the army.	The Dow Hoax (2003) On a BBC News telecast, Dow Chemical announces that it will take full responsibility for the Bhopal disaster. The corporate spokesman turns out to be a member of the activist performance group The Yes Men.	Political Advertisement VII: 1952-2008 (2008) Antonio Muntadas and Marshall Reese compile political advertisements in an ongoing work that explores the iconography of American electioneering.		CBS Evening News (1986) Coverage of the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger shortly after its takeoff. With Dan Rather.		
SAT	OIA TV (2011) A selection of Duran explains the meanings behind Hindu rituals and other spiritual practices.	The Mike Douglas Show with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Day 5 (1972) On their final day on the show, John and Yoko break records for Mike and meet George Carlin. Featuring Dr. Gary E. Schwartz and Rena Uviller. Musical performances by John & Yoko, Mike with Joe Hamell & Band.			Julia (1968) A series that made television history by making its central character a black single mother.	Political Advertisement VIII: 1952-2008 (1980) Commissioned by Remy Martin, Dara Birnbaum's classic feminist video is both a commercial and a critique of commercials, appropriating footage from a Sergio Valente jeans ad.		The Jeffersons (1980) When Florence raises the other maids in the building to form a union, Louise lends her support. George learns of the plan and does his best to squash it.	The Facts of Life (1981) Geni (comedian Gari Jawell) arrives on campus to visit her cousin Blair. When the French teacher asks Geni out on a date, Blair worries that Geni, who has cerebral palsy, will get her heart broken.	The Eternal Frame (1976) Radical art collective Art Farm teams up with fellow San Franciscans T.R. Ulbrich to mend the Kennedy assassination, with some surprisingly poignant results.	Ellen (1999) "The Puzzy Epizone" Part II: In the first installment of this momentous, two-part episode, Ellen comes to her friends and endorses a relationship with Susan, played by guest star Laura Dern.	Ellen (1999) In the conclusion of the episode, Ellen comes to her friends and endorses a relationship with Susan, played by guest star Laura Dern.	CBS Evening News (1991) Dan Rather reports on Iraq's refusal to withdraw from Kuwait by the deadline mandated in a United Nations resolution.	

ANT FARM
ALVIN BALTROP
TINA BARNEY
ROMARE BEARDEN
ROBERT BECHTLE
LYNDA BENGLIS
DARA BIRNBAUM
FERNANDO BOTERO
MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE
ANDREA BOWERS
BRIAN CALVIN
LARRY CLARK
SUE COE
CARLOS CORTEZ
JOHN CURRIN
PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA
EMORY DOUGLAS
NICOLE EISENMAN

KATY GRANNAN
DUANE HANSON
K8 HARDY AND
WYNNE GREENWOOD
KEITH HARING
ROBERT HEINECKEN
BARKLEY L. HENDRICKS
JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH
DEBORAH KASS
ALEX KATZ
JACOB LAWRENCE
NIKKI S. LEE
ROBERT LONGO
NATE LOWMAN
LINDA LUCERO
DANNY MCDONALD
MARILYN MINTER
ANTONIO MUNTADAS

JULIO CESAR MORALES
ALICE NEEL
LEROY NEIMAN
SHIRIN NESHAT
CADY NOLAND
TOM OTTERNESS
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RICHARD PHILLIPS
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MARSHALL REESE
NORMAN ROCKWELL
MARTHA ROSLER
BETYE SAAR
JACKIE SALLOUM
WILLIAM SCOTT
GEORGE SEGAL
RICHARD SERRA
BEN SHAHN

JASON SIMON
SYLVIA SLEIGH
MAY STEVENS
SWOON
RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA
TOM OF FINLAND
TOP VALUE TV
CARMELITA TROPICANA
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XAVIER VIRAMONTES
ANDY WARHOL
HANNAH WILKE
FRED WILSON
DAVID WOJNAROWICZ
THE YES MEN