**Transatlantic Legacy: Full Circle**
With Artist Tony Ramos

October 6 - 9.
Granoff Center for the Creative Arts
154 Angell Street, Providence, Rhode Island

**Curator and Program Director:**
Claire Andrade-Watkins, PhD

**Curatorial Assistant:**
Gabby Follett, MFA candidate, Emerson College

**Installation Video:**
Producer/Cinematography, Claire Andrade-Watkins; Cinematography/Editor, Omar J. Cruz Rubio
TRANSATLANTIC LEGACY: FULL CIRCLE

The work of Tony Ramos as a pioneering performance and media artist is framed by his sojourns from Rhode Island to Cape Verde. It spans a forty year trajectory of recording, documenting, and creating a narrative that connects dots and points of space, time, history, and memory. The Rhode Island return of the artist and his work 40 years later brings full circle a unique and important transatlantic legacy, connecting a body of work that is local, global, and universal.

Sponsored by the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice at Brown University; the Brown Center for Students of Color (Black Heritage Series); the Creative Arts Council at Brown University; Electronic Arts Intermix; Spia Media Productions, Inc.; and Providence Community Library.
Schedule of Events

THROUGH OCTOBER 18th
Exhibition of Paintings & Two-Channel Video Installation
Granoff Center for the Creative Arts, Lower Lobby Gallery,
Ground Floor, 154 Angell Street

Exhibition of Paintings
Acrylic, mixed media on canvas

Two-Channel Video Installation
Black & White, 1973-75
12:58 min, color, sound, Two Channels
Black & White was recently restored by Electronic Arts Intermix

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6th
Granoff Center for the Creative Arts, Martinos Auditorium,
Ground Floor, 154 Angell Street

3:30 PM
Youth Program Refreshments
Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, 94 Waterman Street

4:30 PM
Youth Program Screening: About Media

5:30 PM
Panel: Sustainability and Preservation
Tony Ramos, Rebecca Cleman, and Claire Andrade-Watkins
Following the screening, Ramos will be on a panel with Rebecca Cleman, Distribution Director of Electronic Arts Intermix, and Claire Andrade-Watkins, PhD, Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, Director of the Fox Point Cape Verdean Project.

7:30 PM
Screening of Decent Men

8:30 PM
Q&A
Moderated by Rebecca Cleman
Director of Distribution of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7th
Granoff Center for the Creative Arts, Martinos Auditorium,
Ground Floor, 154 Angell Street

4:00 PM
Matinee screenings

The Beginning of the Transatlantic Legacy

Cape Verde Independence July 5, 6 1975

Some Aspects of Cape Verdean Culture
Legacy and Performance Art

Balloon Nose Blow-Up

Plastic Bag Tie-Up

The first two films were some of the earliest video work by Ramos, who received a 1975 grant from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities for travel to Cape Verde and a sony color 1/2" reel to reel video camera. Ramos traveled to the islands of Sao Tiago, Fogo, and Sao Vicente, and was the only American camera to capture the historic end of 500 years of Portuguese colonial rule. Over eighty hours of video were shot, and efforts are currently underway to raise funds to restore and transfer the rest of videos in this valuable archive.

6:00 PM
Formal talk by artist Tony Ramos

Keynote Screening: Nor Was This All By Any Means

Reception to Follow
Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice, 94 Waterman Street

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9th
Rochambeau Library, Community Room
708 Hope Street

3:00 - 4:30 PM
Screening: Mao Meets Muddy
Filmmaker in attendance: Tony Ramos
Artist Statement

When you turned off the old vacuum televisions, or when it was the end of the evening and they did the national anthem and signed off, you got that "snow" -- we called it snow. What you were really looking at is the edge of the universe. It's the electronic noise from the big bang, it's all these little points, moving all over. That's always fascinated me, and my paintings all have that kind of examination of universe, if you will, done with dots. But also it has to do with aborigine painting, it has to do with my mother's crocheting. There is this "point" thing involved. For me each point is a moment in the universe. If there exists such a thing as linear time, then each point represents the universe as it exists at the moment the point was placed on the canvas.

Like points on a map. There's Providence, there's a point on the map. There's Cape Verde as a point on the map. There's Beijing as a point on the map.

I'm obsessed with it actually, absolutely obsessed with this idea of points. It's tantric philosophy. It's zero, less than zero, and manifesting it by this physical application of points. Even when you're doing it, when you're this point thing. It must be like when you're really sailing. There's a zen moment that comes when everything is working right, and you're there. That's how I get when I do those points. It's like doing good zen.

You're no longer there. When I'm in my studio I try not to have a telephone in the studio. I'll turn the music off as well, and just be there. When you're doing a very large canvas, we're talking eight feet by eight feet of dots, that you have to put one at a time, and each one is the universe, it takes a great deal of patience, but it puts you in a space. I love being in that space -- it is a zen non-being. It's being in universe. I have no other way of explaining it.

Interview recorded with Tony Ramos, September 3, 2015, Providence Art Club.
Curator and Program Director Notes

Vision and Voice

When 500 years of Portuguese colonial rule in Cape Verde ended on July 5, 1975, Tony Ramos was there, in Cape Verde capturing that historic moment and point in time on video with equipment purchased from an early grant of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (RICH). Transatlantic Legacy: Full Circle brings the legacy and record of that moment full circle back to Rhode Island where his journey began forty years ago.

Symbolically and metaphorically, Cape Verde has played an integral role in shaping the destiny of the New World. Yet Cape Verde islands are an often overlooked archipelago of ten islands off the coast of west Africa. These video narratives document the overlapping, connected and interconnected points of Fox ‘Point, ‘India ‘Point,’ ‘Point’ Street Bridge. The global journey follows geographical points on a map: Cape Verde, Africa, Asia, all converging back in ‘Rhode’ Island, where the sea was the road of arrival and departure, and the ‘road’ I-95 shaped, defined, then displaced, the Cape Verdean community.

Construction of-or preservation of- memory is a privilege of entitlement connected to technology, access and resources. Tony Ramos’ work disrupts that power of privilege by controlling the narrative of the video and connecting to the ‘dots’ of preservation, media literacy and history. The global footprint of Tony Ramos’ journey reconstitutes the presence and memory of forgotten and overlooked voices. The resulting digital archive is a priceless repository of knowledge and education for the generations that follow.

This rare gift is made possible through the archival stewardship, preservation, and distribution of his video art through Electronic Arts Intermix, and the efforts of a community-based research group comprised of descendants
of the Fox Point Cape Verdean community who preserved the footage shot in Cape Verde and the Cape Verdean communities in the United States.

Coming full circle, back to the ‘Point,’ 40 years later, the videos also provide a critical re-linking of ruptured and broken threads of a community history that was fragmented.--forgotten, but not lost and now rediscovered: a Transatlantic Legacy: Full Circle.

--Claire Andrade-Watkins, PhD

Overview of Cape Verde/Rhode Island History

Fox Point was a major port of entry for Cape Verdeans arriving in the United States. Historically, Cape Verdeans are amongst the first people of the African diaspora to immigrate voluntarily to the United States, which is now home to the largest population of Cape Verdeans in the world outside of Cape Verde.

This distinctive migration to the USA began in the 19th century. The ten-island archipelago of Cape Verde was uninhabited prior to “discovery” in 1462 by the Portuguese. Cape Verde became a central site for European, particularly Portuguese, colonialism. In the period of the Atlantic slave trade it was a staging post and slavery was part of the islands’ history until it was abolished in 1878. From Cape Verde the Europeans developed the economic enterprise we now know as the plantation and transported it to the New World. The complicated history of Cape Verde is central to the creation of the modern world. Cape Verde won its independence from Portugal on July 5, 1975.
Cape Verdeans willingly joined the stream of immigrants arriving on these shores to pursue the “American Dream.” Renowned seafarers, and prized as crew for whalers, Cape Verdeans followed the connections back to New England as the whaling industry declined at the end of the 19th century. As non-English speaking immigrants with little or no education, Cape Verdeans filled the need for unskilled labor in Rhode Island as longshoremen, domestics, cooks and factory workers in manufacturing, textile mills, and the jewelry industry.

The Cape Verdean community of Fox Point settled near the waterfront and the Port of Providence in tenements stretching along South Main Street and Wickenden Street. Once a bustling port for loose cargo-lumber, coal, and scrap iron, most of the men from “the Point” worked the boats as proud members of Local 1329 of the I.L.A. (the International Longshoremen’s Association). Urban renewal, gentrification, the expansion of Brown University and the construction of Interstate I-195 displaced the thriving, self-sufficient Cape Verdean community that had once called Fox Point home.
Tony Ramos’s *About Media* (1977), a powerful deconstruction of television hegemony, opens with a rendition of Marvin Gaye’s "What's Going On," the legendary soul song about a disillusioned Vietnam War veteran – here doubling as Ramos's anthem for showing what goes on behind the making of a biased newscast. When a news crew arrived at Ramos’s apartment to interview him about the 18-month prison term he served for draft evasion during the Vietnam War, Ramos greeted them with his own cameraman and video camera. He then turned his footage into an indelible record and expression, using humor, engaging storytelling, and confrontational performance to disrupt the efforts of commercial television to sanitize and depoliticize his story.

The urgency of Ramos's encounter with the news crew may be lost on contemporary viewers, who can’t imagine a world without YouTube and Vines and any number of ways to personalize media, but in the 1970s television had a monolithic power, with few outlets for alternative voices. Like other individuals and collectives working in media, including Marlon Riggs, Fred Hampton and the Black Panther Party, the Videofreex, and Global Village, Ramos saw the political efficacy of using video to turn consumers into producers, giving those outside mainstream commercial television a means to tell their own story and broadcast it to the public. (EAI)

*Tony Ramos, 1977, 25 min, color, sound*
Decent Men

*Decent Men* (1977-2013), created over a period of almost forty years, extends the story of *About Media* with a vivid recounting of Ramos's interactions with prisoners and guards as a 23-year-old draft resister. His charged performance narrative is interrupted with vintage cartoons that feature grotesque racial stereotypes, excerpts from his early performances, and *About Media*. The result is an unforgettable first-hand narrative of Ramos's prison experience within the cultural, racial and political climate of America in the late 1960s. (EAI)

*Tony Ramos*  
1977/2013, 70 min, color and b&w, sound

Cape Verde Independence July 5, 6 1975

Short documentary from archival footage shot by Tony Ramos in Cape Verde on the first two days of independence in Cape Verde after 500 years of colonial rule. (SPIA Media Productions, Inc.)

*Director Tony Ramos: Archival compilation. Producer: Claire Andrade-Watkins, SPIA Media Productions, Inc. 2006, 13 min*

Some Aspects of Cape Verdean Culture

*Some Aspects Of Cape Verdean Culture* is a re-discovered and restored documentary shot in 1975 in Cape Verde at the time of independence by pioneering video artist Tony Ramos. (SPIA Media Productions, Inc.)

*Tony Ramos, 1975, 32 min*
Balloon Nose Blow-Up

With a striking economy of means, Ramos enacts a close-up performance action: he blows up a balloon with his nostril until it bursts in his face. He then repeats the action with his other nostril. Alternating nostrils, he continues to blow up the balloon until it bursts. With each iteration his exhaustion visibly increases; he gasps for breath, almost to the point of passing out. (EAI)

1972, 11:18 min, b&w, sound

Plastic Bag Tie-Up

In this harrowing performance, Ramos and another man (the artist Lowell Darling) are blindfolded, their hands and feet bound, and sealed into body-sized plastic bags. Over the course of twenty minutes, the men struggle to escape from the clear plastic bags. The real-time performance creates a palpable tension in the viewer as the men writhe inside the bags. Ramos created and performed this piece at Cal Arts, shortly after he had been released from federal prison, where he had served eighteen months for resisting the draft during the Vietnam War. (EAI)

1972, 21:16 min, b&w, sound
Performers: Tony Ramos, Joe Ray, Lowell Darling

Nor Was This All By Any Means

In this densely layered work, Ramos explores his cultural and personal heritage through a collage of recorded and appropriated footage. Juxtaposing African and American landscapes, personal and media imagery, he traces a spiritual and physical journey that moves from Harlem to Goree
Island, Cape Verde and Tanzania. In a forceful portrait of cultural disenfranchisement that refers to the African diaspora and the bitter harvest sown by slavery, he challenges the veracity of mass cultural images of African-Americans. (EAI)

Tony Ramos 1978, 24 min, color, sound

Writer/Director: Anthony D. Ramos. Technical Assistants: Mike Frenchman, David Pentecost. Camera: Tony Ramos, Mike Frenchman, Jeff Hodges. Music: Tony Ramos. Audio: Tony Ramos, Mike Frenchman. Editors: Anthony Ramos with Mike Frenchman. Special Thanks: Kezia Moore, Simba Tayari, Khidir Rhazig, John Trayna, Faith Riviera, Juan Downey, The Alfamas, Kijton Ama, Kawe. This tape was made possible by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and funds from the National Endowment for the Arts through Electronic Arts Intermix, Inc.

Mao Meets Muddy

Mao Meets Muddy is a documentary shot by Tony Ramos while accompanying the painter Frederick Brown to Beijing for Brown’s exhibition at the National Museum of the Chinese Revolution -- one year before the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square, where the museum is situated. Anthony D. Ramos was among the earliest video artists to use the medium as a tool for a critique of the mass media, and for giving agency to marginalized communities and individuals. In his powerful but rarely seen video works of the 1970s, Ramos sought to combine art and activism.

1989, 40 min
**Black & White**

*Black & White* is a historically significant two-channel video piece that was groundbreaking and radical in its form and content. Two video images are seen side-by-side. A man (Tony Ramos) and a woman (Ann Ramos), each occupying a separate screen, face the camera, nude from the waist up. In simultaneous performance actions, they slowly transform the color of their bodies and faces; the man applies white pigment to his dark skin, while the woman applies black pigment to her white skin. The soundtrack is a textured collage that mixes Cape Verdean music with the artist reading texts on Portugal's Prince Henry the Navigator, the voyages of slaves from Africa, and Cape Verdean heritage. The rarely seen *Black & White*, which is one of the earliest two-channel installations in video art history, is a powerful and prescient statement on racial, gender, and cultural identities.

States Ramos: “[*Black & White*] speaks to so much about the times then and now -- and in the 1970's mixed race/culture was a life threatening combination. It also speaks to the idea that when you enslave someone else you make a slave of yourself. A slave culture means that master and slave are in an embrace of non-freedom. It also speaks to equality of the sexes -- I am you and you are me! The image offers a great many possible interpretations, especially in the context of the decade of the 1960's.”

Lori Zippay, Executive Director, EAI

1973-75
12:58 min, color, sound, Two Channels
*Black & White* was recently restored by Electronic Arts Intermix
Tony Ramos: Artist

Tony Ramos, a Cape Verdean American from East Providence was born in 1944 in Providence, Rhode Island, and lives in the South of France. He studied painting at Southern Illinois University and received an M.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts, where he was graduate assistant to Allan Kaprow. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, and an Aspen Fellowship from the Aspen Institute, among other awards. In the 1970s Ramos was a video consultant for the United Nations and the National Council of Churches. He lived in Paris in the 1980s, where he was a Professor at the American Center and oversaw the first television cabling of Paris. During the 1970s and 1980s, Ramos traveled widely in Europe, Africa, China and the Middle East. He recorded video during the end of Portugal’s colonial rule of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, in Tehran during the 1980 hostage crisis, and in Beijing just prior to the Tiananmen Square massacre. He taught at Rhode Island School of Design, New York University, and the University of California at San Diego, among others. In the late 1980s he turned to painting as his primary medium. He has exhibited his paintings at numerous international venues, including the American Jazz Museum and Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center, Kansas City; Biennale de Dakar, Senegal; and Galerie du Dragon, Paris, among others.

Ramos’ video works have been shown internationally, including at the Pasadena Art Museum, California (1973); Musée d’Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (1974); Whitney Museum of American Art (1975) and The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1992), among others. Recent

Claire Andrade-Watkins, PhD: Curator
Filmmaker/historian, spiamedia.com

Claire Andrade-Watkins is a 2nd generation born Cape Verdean Fox Pnt native, is a. She is a Professor of Africana and Postcolonial Media Studies, Institute for Liberal Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies, Emerson College. She is a 2015 Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, and a Fellow, Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University. She is a scholar of francophone and lusophone African cinema, a 1995-1996 Fulbright Scholar in Cape Verde, and a recipient of an American Philosophical Society grant in 1997.

A pioneering filmmaker who has produced documentaries since 1986 on the Cape Verdean Diaspora in the United States, she is the producer/director of Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican? A Cape Verdean American Story (SKFPR) (2006), the popular and critically acclaimed feature documentary about the Cape Verdean community in the Fox Point section of Providence, RI. She has received grants for filmmaking from the LEF Foundation, Emerson College Faculty Advancement Grants, and multiple grants from both the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities for her documentary work and other projects. She was a 2009 Massachusetts Cultural Council Artist Fellow in Film.
She is the President of SPIA Media Productions, Inc., a production and distribution company founded in 1998 specializing in media from the African Diaspora, and Director of the Fox Point Cape Verdean Project, a community based research initiative founded in 2007.

Rebecca Cleman: Moderator
www.eai.org

Rebecca Cleman is the Director of Distribution of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI). She has programmed screenings for such venues as ISSUE Project Room, Anthology Film Archives, Light Industry, Squeaky Wheel, and the Migrating Forms Festival, including most recently The Wooster Group’s White Homeland Commando at Spectacle Theater, Brooklyn; Global Village’s The Irish Tapes at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; and Merce Cunningham’s Assemblage at International House in Philadelphia. She has published writing in The Moving Image Source, Screen Slate, and artists’ monographs including Dara Birnbaum: The Dark Matter of Media Light, and a forthcoming DVD box-set of work by Michael Smith. In 2014 she served as an EMF and IND panelist for NYSCA. She is co-president of the New York Film and Video Council.
The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ)
The CSSJ is a scholarly research center with a public humanities mission. Recognizing that racial and chattel slavery were central to the historical formation of the Americas and the modern world, the CSSJ creates a space for the interdisciplinary study of the historical forms of slavery while also examining how these legacies shape our contemporary world. We are also attentive to contemporary forms of human bondage and injustice.
brown.edu/slaveryjustice

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)
EAI is one of the world’s leading resources for moving image art. Founded in 1971, EAI is a New York-based nonprofit organization that fosters the creation, exhibition, distribution, and preservation of video and media art. EAI holds a major collection of over 3,500 new and historical media artworks, from groundbreaking early video by pioneering figures of the 1960s to new digital projects by today’s emerging artists. EAI works closely with artists, museums, schools and other venues worldwide to preserve and provide access to this significant archive. EAI also presents public programs such as artists’ talks, exhibitions and panels; extensive digital resources; viewing access; technical facilities, and educational services. EAI’s Online Catalogue is a comprehensive resource on the artists and works in the EAI collection, and features expansive materials on media art’s histories and current practices.
eai.org
Brown University Creative Arts Council (CAC)
The CAC supports the goals of individual creative arts departments and programs, while facilitating a common vision for the arts that transcends disciplines and creates unity. The Council serves as a catalyst for innovative collaboration across disciplines and provides a regular forum for communication among all members of the arts community. Through its public activities, the CAC seeks to maximize the visibility of the arts on campus, throughout the local community, and on a national and international level. brown.edu/academics/creative-arts-council

SPIA Media Productions, Inc.
Creating a history that matters to the people the history is the mission of SPIA Media Productions, Inc. Founded in 1998, "SPIA" means to "see" in the Cape Verdean language, or in this instance, vision. SPIA’s vision is to build history one story at a time, in different forms and media. The goal is to create a sustainable legacy that engages and draws from the voices, memories, hopes and dreams of a community connected to New England by a unique transatlantic history. spiamedia.com

Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC)
The BCSC serves as a gathering place for communities of color. Students are encouraged to build meaningful relationships across difference, develop racial and ethnic consciousness, and enact change at Brown and beyond. The BCSC advances the University’s mission of educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation by empowering students of color, cultivating leadership, facilitating critical reflection, fostering informed action, and promoting social justice. Support for this program provided by BCSC’s Black Heritage Series. brown.edu/campus-life/support/students-of-color
Providence Community Library (PCL)
PCL provides free, accessible library services to improve and enrich the lives of the people of Providence. Our community libraries serve as vibrant hubs within the neighborhoods of Providence, providing programs and services that respond to the needs of the community. provcomlib.org