

## Los Cybrids

### *La Raza Techno-Crítica*

Teaching Guide to The Kitchen's online Video Viewing Room  
presentation by artist collective [Los Cybrids](#), organized by Angelique  
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## The Kitchen's Video Viewing Room

As part of The Kitchen's digital programming, the Video Viewing Room series presents recent video works by artists and/or archival recordings online. This initiative revives The Kitchen's longstanding Video Viewing Room—a dedicated space within our buildings from 1975 through the early 1990s. Functioning at first as a resource facility where visitors could watch their own tapes or view videos from The Kitchen's archive and collection, in fall 1978 the Video Viewing Room began to feature curated programs of artists' videos.

Featured in the On Screen section of The Kitchen's website, each Video Viewing Room presentation takes on a different form, centered around the video works presented. However, each entry usually includes an accompanying introductory text by the curatorial organizer(s), art writing and/or companion audio bites, images of archival material, and other references.

## What is Los Cybrids: *La Raza Techno-Crítica*?

This Video Viewing Room presents three short video works *THE GLOBAL WARMAQUINA: The Internet and Its Discontents* (2001), *El World Brain Disorder: surveillance.control.pendejismo* (2002-2003) and *TEch TV* (2003) by Los Cybrids: La Raza Techno-Crítica—a collective of three artists René García, John Jota Leños, and Praba Pilar active from 1999–2003 in the San Francisco Bay Area, alongside select photographs from the artists's archive.

## Before you watch

### Think about:

1. What is your relationship to technology?
2. How do you, personally, adapt to new technologies? How do your communities adapt? How does the world at large adapt?
3. In what ways is technological advancement linked to the government, military, and surveillance? How does this link affect people in their daily lives?
4. What role do tech companies play in the predatory use of technology?

5. Where have you seen art as a form of activism? How can artists use their work to create lasting change?

## Important Words and Terms to Define

Below are some key terms used in the Video Viewing Room presentation. Some of these terms are subjective and depend on different historical connotations. Read the below definitions and use your own research to expand upon them. Maybe you have your own definition of them!

6. **La raza:** The Spanish expression “la raza” ('the people' or 'the community'; literal translation: 'the race') has historically been used to refer to the mixed-race populations (primarily though not always exclusively in the Western Hemisphere), considered as an ethnic or racial unit historically deriving from the Spanish Empire, and the process of racial intermixing during the Spanish colonization of the Americas with the indigenous populations of the Americas. The term was not widely used in Latin America in the early-to-mid-20th century but has been redefined and reclaimed in Chicanismo and the United Farm Worker organization since 1968. This terminology for mixed-race originated as a reference to "La Raza Cosmica" by Mexican philosopher and politician José Vasconcelos, although it is no longer used in this context or associated with "La Raza Cosmica" ideology by Mexican-American, Native rights movements and activists in the United States. This definition comes from the footnotes in the Video Viewing Room presentation.
7. **Montage:** film editing technique in which a series of short shots are sequenced together. Filmmakers use this technique to make associations, condense time, or intertwine plotlines.
8. **Globalization:** the growth of interdependence between international economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information.
9. **Militarization:** the process of preparing a society, country, or region for war or violence. This can include equipping police with military-grade weapons, structuring civilian society to support the military, or deploying the military to intervene in political demonstrations.
10. **Cyborg:** a being who is part technology and part biological. This term is often used in science fiction and was coined by science fiction writers in 1960.

## Watch 3 Short Films:

1. [\*THE GLOBAL WARMAQUINA: The Internet and Its Discontents \(2001\)\*](#) parodies how surveillance, environmental degradation, and militarization are at the forefront of a wave of globalization newly enabled by information technologies. Footage of then-president Bill Clinton and the United States Congress cuts to clips of anti-globalization (WTO) and union labor protests colliding with police violence. Simultaneously we see García, Leaños, and Pilar performing as figureheads in the “investors fiscal year-end and state of the globe report on the state of high-technology investment.” (7) It feels like the prelude to a board-

meeting-cum-lecture-performance where the artists take the stage to praise the spread of digital capitalism and global capital investments.

2. [\*El World Brain Disorder: surveillance.control.pendejismo \(2002–2003\)\*](#)

similarly satirizes how sanctioned militarization and social reorganization is inherent within the declaration of a “New World Order.” First coined by the Bush administration in 1991 after the Gulf War in Iraq, the term proposes a unilateral global system of cooperating liberal democracies. The fast-paced video montage of national security footage, sniper cameras, and data tracking software unfolds like a mash-up of a “we interrupt this program” broadcast, a system-reboot pop-up window, and a video game commercial. Ironically, a drum and bass-esque remix of the track “It’s a Small World” by Richard M. and Robert B. Sherman scores the video, implicating the internet’s non-stop wireless connectivity as a source of both unrestrained access and unforeseen commodification.

3. [\*Chicano, Chicana, Latino, Latina, Hispano, Hispana: TEch TV \(2003\)\*](#) The group’s vision continues to surge through an exaggerated type of burla (mockery) that is quintessentially Mexican. This sensibility—rife with wordplay, double entendres, and verbs modified as adjectives—is particularly idiosyncratic, shady, and often spills into themes that might be deemed “politically incorrect.” While silly to try to capture an affect / effect that is deeply social and culturally-specific within the limits of the English language, Los Cybrids democratize this sense of humor by attending to how its meaning and liveness might serve as forms of study. The video *Chicano, Chicana, Latino, Latina, Hispano, Hispana: TEch TV* (2003), as they call it, is “the only show dedicated to Latinos in advanced technology.” The show is frenetic, mixing news updates and emotional stories with slapstick comedy, unfolding like the late-night Univision Spanish-language television program called *Sábado Gigante*.

## After you watch

### Reflection

1. How does the format of these films lend to the themes? How can montage be a tool for political messaging?
2. Why do you think Los Cybrids used satire and humor in these films? How did the juxtaposing tones make you feel while you watched?
3. Has your opinion of technology changed after watching these short films? How so?
4. Los Cybrids use a hybrid of Spanish and English throughout their work. What power does language have to expand audiences?

# THE KITCHEN

NEW YORK CITY'S CENTER  
FOR EXPERIMENTAL ART  
AND THE **AVANT-GARDE**  
SINCE 1971

## Art-Making Activity

### Techno-Crítica Collage

Inspired by the way Los Cybrids reframe and repurpose propaganda as a form of criticism, you will use magazines and advertisements to create a collage that expresses your feelings about technology and the themes of these films.

#### Materials

1. Magazines, ads, flyers, any collage materials that speak to you!
2. Scissors
3. Glue stick
4. Paper
5. Liquid glue
6. Water
7. Jar
8. Wide paintbrush or sponge

#### Instructions

1. Cut out images that speak to you. How you cut them out and which part of the image you use is up to you!
2. Using your glue stick, paste your images to your paper. Let the placement of the images speak to your feelings around the themes of Los Cybrids.
3. Mix equal part glue and water into your jar to create your own Modge Podge
4. Spread a thin, even layer of Modge Podge over your collage
5. Let dry completely and share your final piece with your friends!