The Present is the Form of All Life:
The Time Capsules of Ant Farm and LST
Sept. 9 — Oct. 23, 2016

Opening Panel Discussion: Friday, Sept. 9, 6-7 p.m.
Panel discussion featuring artists of LST (Chip Lord, Curtis Schreier, and Bruce Tomb), moderated by Andrea Grover, Parrish Art Museum’s Century Arts Foundation Curator of Special Projects
Opening Reception: Friday, Sept. 9, 7 - 9 p.m.

No-one has ever lived in the past. No-one will ever live in the future. The present is the form of all life.
(The computer Alpha 60 in Alphaville, Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, 1965.)

BROOKLYN, NY – Pioneer Works is pleased to announce The Present is the Form of All Life: the Time Capsules of Ant Farm and LST, an exhibition exploring the time capsule projects of seminal media art and architecture group Ant Farm and their contemporary successors, LST.

Tracing the time capsule’s evolution from analog archive to digital database, The Present is the Form of All Life examines the mutable nature of time perception, rapidly accelerating media obsolescence, and our shifting cultural attitudes toward preservation and privacy. The exhibition is curated by Gabriel Florenz and Liz Flyntz, designed by LST, and features an archive of historical time capsules, contemporary interactive media sculptures, and a commissioned monumental inflatable environment that fills the entirety of Pioneer Works’ main exhibition space.

The exhibition opens with a chronology of materials representing the time capsule works and creative process of Ant Farm (1968-1978) and LST (2007-today), including schematics, extensive architectural
As this presentation reveals, Ant Farm’s time capsules deviated from typical examples of the form: they did not preserve a stable cultural self-portrait that could persist through time. Rather, encased within everyday objects such as a refrigerator and a 1968 Oldsmobile Vista Cruiser (Citizen’s Time Capsule, 1975), the time capsules were filled with random consumer goods, recorded media, and other tchotchkes. They were defiantly homemade with little promise of endurance. Whether destroyed, stolen, lost, or deemed “environmentally hazardous,” each work was a categorical failure, underscoring the humor and counter-cultural critique at the core of the Ant Farm and LST ethos.

Beyond the exhibition’s archival chronology, a monumental inflatable structure custom-designed by LST fills the entirety of Pioneer Works’ main exhibition space, rising three stories high. Recalling Ant Farm’s radical architectural environments from the sixties and seventies, the transitory structure cocoons the exhibition’s main feature: Ant Farm Media Van v.08 [Time Capsule] (2008-2016), a contemporary interactive media sculpture and time capsule by LST. This large-scale work re-envisions Ant Farm’s historic 1971 Media Van — a Chevy custom-outfitted as a nomadic television studio that was driven cross-country for performances and documentary productions. Within the contemporary version, a device called the HUQQAH randomly downloads media files from participants’ smartphones throughout the duration of the exhibition. The compiled data creates a digital time capsule at Pioneer Works.

Digital archives and the nature of time perception is further explored through Time Capsule Triptych (2009). This 18-foot-longover 25-foot-long work by LST consists of three parts: an installation of over 4,000 digital audio and visual files collected through the HUQQAH in 2008; a video documentation of the (fictional) re-emergence of the original Media Van from a missile silo in California; and an architectural rendering of the future resting place of the contemporary media van / time capsule. Together, the media within the triptych manifests a larger artistic fiction that attempts to document the past (discovery of the 1971 Media Van), frame the present (digital archive from the contemporary media van), and posit the future (the eventual site of the contemporary media van).

“Over the course of five decades, and specifically through their time capsule works, Ant Farm and LST have routinely transcended disciplinary boundaries and, through experimentation, pioneered new artistic mediums that challenge viewers to think differently” says exhibition co-curator and Pioneer Works Director Gabriel Florenz. “Transcending boundaries and encouraging experimentation are at the heart of Pioneer Works’ mission. Through this exhibition, we celebrate and hope to learn from those who established the practices and approaches that our organization strives to foster through a diverse range of programs.”

The Present is the Form of All Life will be accompanied by art and education programs, including guided exhibition tours and long-form classes on inflatables as well as performances and panel discussions within the inflatable structure. A full schedule of events will be announced shortly. The exhibition will also be accompanied by a fully-illustrated publication devoted exclusively to Ant Farm and LST’s time capsules, and will include essays, a discussion, and never-before published ephemera.

About Ant Farm and LST

Ant Farm was a group of radical architects, designers, and media artists active from 1968-1978. Perhaps most well-known for creating the iconic desert monolith Cadillac Ranch and pulling off spectacular
performances like *Media Burn* (1975), the group also created a variety of video works, popularized inflatable architecture, and produced participatory performances and a futuristic house in Texas (*House of the Century*, 1972). The core members — Chip Lord, Doug Michels, Hudson Marquez, and Curtis Schreier — sustained a core interest in American cultural iconography, nomadic living, technology, and big cars over a ten-year collaborative career. The group officially disbanded in 1978, following a devastating studio fire. Doug Michels, one of the original members of Ant Farm, died in 2003.

LST is a contemporary group including Ant Farm members Chip Lord and Curtis Schreier joined by the artist and architect Bruce Tomb. The contemporary group formed around the creation of the *Ant Farm Media Van v.08 [Time Capsule]*, which contains the *HUQQUH*. The *HUQQUH* is a digital media time capsule creation device which uploads files from participants. The first iteration of the *Ant Farm Media Van v.08 [Time Capsule]* was created for *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now*, a 2008 exhibition at SFMOMA. (which also holds a number of Ant Farm works in its collection).

### About the Artists

Chip Lord is an artist who works with video and photography. As a member of Ant Farm he produced video art classics like *Media Burn* as well as the Cadillac Ranch sculpture in Amarillo, Texas. His work has been shown at film festivals and in museums: in 2005 a retrospective of his work was shown at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arts Reina Sofia in Madrid and in 2010 he completed a public art piece for LAX Airport. He is Professor Emeritus in the Film & Digital Media Department at U. C. Santa Cruz. Curtis Schreier studied architecture at RISD. In 1970 he joined Ant Farm during a period of architectural experimentation with inflatable structures and was instrumental in the creation of *Media Burn*, the *Dolphin Embassy*, *Convention City*, and other works. In 2007 he joined Chip Lord and Bruce Tomb for the commission *Ant Farm Media Van v.08 [Time Capsule]* for the SFMOMA exhibition “*The Art of Participation: 1950-Now.*” He has lectured on architecture at Yale and the University of Pennsylvania.

Bruce Tomb trained in architecture at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. His interdisciplinary practice includes architectural, installation, and sculptural projects that are peripheral to architectural practice yet have concerns that are central to architectural thought: the relationship among people; seeking the humanity in our choice of materials and technology; and questioning the use of sites, resources, and our environment. He began collaborating with Chip Lord and Curtis Schreier in 2007 to design the *Ant Farm Media Van v.08 [Time Capsule]*.

### About the Curators

Gabriel Florenz is Pioneer Works’ Director and an independent curator. He studied art briefly at San Francisco State University and went on to work as a studio manager for various artists while still pursuing his art practice. In 2011 he helped found Pioneer Works, leading the massive renovation and then developing its program. As Director he oversees all operations, partnerships and the artistic program. His curatorial projects have included Benjamin Torres’ *DIARIO SE CUELA LA LUZ, DIARIO SE FUGA EL COLOR*, *The Hiroshima Panels*, and Derrick Adams’ *ON*. He has also commissioned films including Molly Lowe’s *Redwood* and Shezad Dawood’s *It was a time that was a time*.

Liz Flyntz is a curator and writer. She has organized exhibitions, screenings, and symposia focussed on media and systems-based art around the US and in Germany. Her writing on media art history and
interviews with contemporary media artists have been published by Afterimage, the Creator’s Project, and Intercourse magazine. She has an MFA from the seminal Media Study department at SUNY Buffalo and studied at the Bauhaus University Weimar. Her BA is from the radical hotbed Antioch College, where Ant Farm designed and built the campus art building.

Support

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About Pioneer Works

Pioneer Works is a non-profit arts center for research and experimentation in contemporary culture. Through a broad range of exhibitions, performances, arts and science residencies, and educational programs, Pioneer Works seeks to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries, foster community, and provide a space where alternative modes of thought are supported and activated in tangible ways. The organization was founded in 2012 by artist Dustin Yellin and is located in a 25,000-square-foot former manufacturing warehouse in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

159 Pioneer Street | Brooklyn, NY 11231
Hours: Wednesday – Sunday from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Free and open to the public
www.pioneerworks.org

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