

We Tell Groups/Collectives/Community Media Centers

Not Channel Zero

Not Channel Zero was a New York City-based video collective of African American video artists formed in the early 1990s. It combined alternative television style with a critique of commercial media, using low-end, accessible technology and extremely small budgets, sometimes only fifty dollars. For three years, the collective produced regular programming for Manhattan Cable Access on the anti-war movement, homophobia in communities of color, police brutality, sexism, and urban issues in Black and Latino communities. Revising the famous Gil Scott Heron phrase, their motto was “The Revolution, Televised,” asserting they were making “grassroots, Afrocentric television aiming at politics, culture, and re-education.” Not Channel Zero adopted Afrocentric style, form, and content, bringing hip hop strategies of slow motion, fast forwarding, and repetition to their videos as they appropriated commercial media images. They also produced a longer work, *The Nation Erupts* (1992), probing the aftermath of the rebellion in reaction to the beating of Rodney King.