

Season 18

A curatorial project by Session 18 of l'Ecole du Magasin

Episode 10

The inescapable experience of transition

Archive - Practice with Ruben Arevshatyan, Samvel Baghdasaryan, Susanna Gyulamiryan, Armine Hovhannisyan, Nazareth Karoyan // Art of Failure // Collectif 1.0.3 // Wafaa Bilal // Heath Bunting // Hiwa K // Kaori Kinoshita & Alain Della Negra // Société Réaliste

Season 18 is Elodie Dufour (France), Marianna Hovhannisyan (Armenia), Yun In Kim (Korea), Marlène Perronet (France), Diane Pigeau (France), Tolga Taluy (Turkey), supervised by Fareed Armaly.

The collective project of the 18th Session of l'Ecole du Magasin is entitled "Season 18".

The first public section of this project was Season18.com, a blog in which the participants related the state of six individual researches and published one thematic group discussion through weekly "episodes". For them, this formal choice reflected a processual work whereas its terminology expressed a shared culture of the mass media. Its format filtered different independent materials published online into certain paths of enquiry, which ultimately reflected more overlaps than separations. These overlaps revealed the shared concepts of mapping, modeling and simulation, which in turn established the working coordinates for the exhibition "The Inescapable Experience of Transition".

Maps, models and simulations attempt to render representations of behaviors, characteristics and relationships on different levels. These symbolic depictions limit territories, build systems and imitate realities. Alternatively, the existence of these different segments sustains the significance of change between them.

In the frame of "The Inescapable experience of transition", Collectif 1.0.3 juxtaposes six screens displaying the chronological Internet history records of the participants as an archeology of the previous researches. Through a first-person shooter, Wafaa Bilal shows the difficulties to choose between the allies and the enemies in the context of a conflict zone. Constrained by physical borders, Hiwa K learns and teaches virtually on demand. Della Negra and Kinoshita follow the adventures of Second Life animal characters in the "Real Life". Heath Bunting compiles documents by experimenting the breaches in the European borders and shares them on a restricted website. Société Réaliste operates a shift between the nature and the processing of data by different types of visualization. *Archive - Practice* questions about the transmission between two art movements in Armenia, a country whose memory is ruptured by two major events during the 20th Century. *Art of Failure* observes the distortions of a symbolic image borrowed from the psychodiagnostic of Rorschach sent ad infinitum between two points geographically separated by hundreds of kilometers.

Through existing and original artworks, this Exhibition reflects on the convergence of borders and boundaries, past and present, real and virtual and the realities of transition as a contemporary relational principle. In collaboration with the curators, Pied la Biche proposes a point of perspective for the display, which spatially materializes the zone of

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transition between Season18.com and the actual exhibition. Denis Carrier offers a graphic design in which the blue gradient on top of the walls suggests a segmented shift to an infinite space, without any borders.

Collectif 1.0.3

Voyage en URL, screensaver, 2005-2009.

<http://www.unpointzeropointrois.tk/>

Collectif 1.0.3 is a collective founded by Anne Couzon Cesca, Arnaud Bernus and François Bernus in 2002. For this collective of artists, whose name recalls the current version of a software, the computer represents a potential space for encounters and overlaps in conservation, conversion and conversation. Through a series of work based on the collection of information and the definition of protocols, they aim to reveal charts of mental activity and tangible forms of cerebral machinery confronted with the network. Situated somewhere in between the documentary and the multimedia installation, these propositions are conceived as intermediary devices.

Voyage en URL is a dynamic screensaver engineered in collaboration with Julien Mariette. It captures and displays the drifts of a navigator from one URL to another. When the computer is idle, it shows the history based on the previous peregrinations. Displayed on the computer screen as the closing credits of a movie, these poetical vibrations are constituted of a list of links depicting a digital portrait of the user. For this exhibition, *Voyage en URL* will use the Internet history of the participants' individual researches made while working on the first public section of the project as a possible documentation for Season18.com.

Wafaa Bilal

The Night of Bush Capturing, video game, 2008

<http://www.wafaabilal.com/>

Wafaa Bilal is an Iraqi American artist, a former professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and currently an assistant professor at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. He works with photography, video, computer games and Internet. He has traveled and lectured extensively to inform audiences of the situation of Iraqi people, and the importance of peaceful conflict resolution.

Quest for Saddam is a first-person shooter video game in which the players got to kill identical Iraqis and hunt down the former dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. It was developed and published in 2003 by Petrilla Entertainment. Three years later, Al Qaeda did its own spin-off entitled *Night of Bush Capturing*. By adding a new "skin" to the existing game and reversing the roles of the hunter and the hunted, the players got to kill identical Americans and hunt down the 43rd U.S. President George W. Bush. Suddenly, a game designed to show a compatriotic reaction to the 9/11 events and the 2003 invasion of Iraq shifted to its antithesis by changing into an on-line propaganda distributed for the "terrorist children". In 2008, Bilal has hacked the Al Qaeda version by casting himself - a faculty member at the Art Institute of Chicago who lost his father and brother in the Iraq war - as a suicide bomber who gets sent to a mission to assassinate the former U.S. President.

Through the lens of an interactive simulation, *Virtual Jihadi* aims to bring attention to the vulnerability of Iraqi civilians on the foreground and to stimulate different reflections on the power of representation.

Virtual Jihadi will be accompanied by a chronological video compilation documenting the history of the game.

Hiwa K

Bottleneck, video, approx. 20', 2009

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<http://www.youtube.com/hiwakhiwa>

Hiwa K is a visual artist and musician born in Iraq. He graduated from secondary school and continued his course of studies in the self-education circles with other visual artists, intellectuals, musicians and theatre artists in his native country. The major fields of these informal studies were European literature and philosophy, learnt from books translated into Arabic. His major interest circles around the notions of event, performativity, as well as the figure of the artist as an amateur. Since 2005, he has been developing a series of projects involving paradoxes of cultural competence, participation, dissemination of knowledge and distribution of the event, notably *Estrangement* co-curated with Aneta Szylak. He was one of the selected participants for the never realized Manifesta 6 School in Cyprus. Since 2002, he has been living in Germany as a political refugee. He is currently preparing his diploma in visual arts in the Akademie der Bildende Kunst in Mainz, Germany.

In parallel, he has been playing flamenco guitar music for more than a decade. He took guitar master classes under Paco Serrano, Anton Jimenez, Oscar Largo and other legendary Spanish flamenco musicians. He is also a guitar teacher who gives private lessons on demand, locally to the American housekeeper of the Akademie der Bildende Kunst among others, and virtually to everyone over the Internet. *Bottleneck* is a video recorded over Skype where Hiwa K learns to play slide guitar in his apartment by watching a tutorial over YouTube, in order to transmit new skills to his students. At the end of the video, he plays a riff from *Paris, Texas* by Ry Cooder, the soundtrack of a movie he has never seen before.

For the opening of the exhibition, Hiwa K will perform a cover of this song in Grenoble with one of his students streaming over the Internet.

Alain Della Negra & Kaori Kinoshita

The Den, short documentary film, 29', 2008.

<http://avatars.blogs.liberation.fr/>

Kaori Kinoshita and Alain Della Negra met each other at le Fresnoy, Studio National des Arts Contemporains in 2001. Since then, their collaboration mainly focused on the passage between the construction of virtual identities and the tellings reported by adults devoted to online communities. Kinoshita and Della Negra's video works are based on first-person narratives, in which the characters usually relate and analyze the online adventures of their avatars in simulated universes such as *Second Life* or *The Sims*. *The Den* combines two specific genres - the documentary and the tale - in order to produce a work where the moral of the story remains biased. It tells the story of a young man who discovers the "Furry" trend. This community of "chimeras" emerged in the '80s with the apparition of Disney's anthromorphic animal-heroes. The number of its members showed a rapid growth since the Web 2.0 revolution. For *The Den*, Kinoshita and Della Negra contacted a man who had a fetishist attraction to this universe. The authors suggested him to participate in an event taking place in "Real Life" organized by one of the pioneers of the community. The video represents his picaresque initiations which will finally reveal unexpected aspects of a community he hardly met online.

Heath Bunting

BorderXing Guide, website, 2001-2011

<http://www.irational.org/>

Best known for his involvement in the formation of the net.art movement in the '90s, Heath Bunting is an artist whose work straddles various modes of action, documentation and visualization. His practice may be viewed in alignment with the tendencies of historical movements such as conceptual art or the Situationist International. Successively activist, hacker and performer, Bunting finds form within every day acts of resistance. Through

different means of documentation and distribution including photography, print publishing and the web, he creates subversive environments and situations in which the systems of control are challenged. More than being a simple line of demarcation in between two nation-states, the borders enable strict control systems over migratory flows. Bunting physically experiences these immaterial lines by crossing them without permission, carefully avoiding checkpoints and border authorities. *BorderXing Guide* is a compilation of informations that he meticulously gathered during various expeditions in Europe. Conversely, the access to the site hosting *BorderXing Guide* is restricted: it is exclusively available to authorized clients with a static IP. By this "reverse authentication" procedure, *BorderXing Guide* is searching to focus on the free movement of persons and informations. In connection with "The Inescapable experience of transition", le MAGASIN - CNAC will become an authorized client, providing access to the documentation available online for the visitors wishing to browse through the archives of the project.

Société Réaliste

MA: *Limes New Roman*, digital print on self-adhesive on vinyl, 2008

MA: *Algonigramme*, digital print on self-adhesive on vinyl, 2007

<http://www.societerealiste.net/>

Société Réaliste is a Parisian art co-operative specializing in political design, experimental economics, territorial ergonomics and social engineering consultancy. "Ministère de l'Architecture" ("Ministry of Architecture") is an ongoing project developed by Société Réaliste under the form of an administration and a production unit, devoted to work on various aspects of politics and geopolitical spaces. Along the lines of research of "Cultures States, Exposition des Arts et Techniques appliquées à la vie moderne" ("Exhibition of Arts and Techniques applied on modern life"), "Ministère de l'Architecture" analyses and imitates the failures of relations between politics and space. In the framework of the current exhibition, two maps from this body of knowledge are displayed, presenting two different forms of territorial apprehension, both on a topological and a typographical level.

MA: *Limes New Roman* is a latin font and an index. From a bird's eye view, the capital letters are based on dividing walls, existing frontiers and checkpoints between nations, while the lower-case letters are forged with the fortified fences marking the boundaries of districts within conflict zones. As a font, it remains cryptographic and incomplete. As an index, it depicts the permanent play between the notions of enunciation, representation and the trails of the historical and the social.

MA: *Algonigram* is a topographical chart showing the main disciplines belonging to a fictional educational program entitled "Master of Arts and Science in Politics of the Space". This pedagogical algorithm describes the general organization of the program with disciplines such as archiving, communication, modeling, "thesaurisation", prototyping, amalgamation, "schizosecurity" and positioning.

Archive - Practice with Ruben Arevshatyan, Samvel Baghdasaryan, Susanna Gyulamiryan, Armine Hovhannisyan, Nazareth Karoyan
3 Posters, A3, 2009

Archive - Practice is a collaborative curatorial initiative that developed out of a set of research interviews produced for the Season18.com in the scope of l'Ecole du Magasin curatorial training program. The project operates in the space shared between curatorial, institutional and educational frameworks, from which to focus on modeling the definition of a working field from the perspective of a younger Armenian generation. The initial interviews were with Art professionals from an Armenian Contemporary Art scene, whose experiences are related to organization and educational work. They suggest a sense of common space exists from out of the way certain historical transitions leave effects in our

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contemporary, whether by discussing conditions associated with the first period of post independence ('90s), which has effects in the current organization of educational work in the Armenian contemporary art field; or by the shift from institutional work to that of education conditioned by the current political, cultural and historical re-formations; or by the experimental and collaborative methods of an educational space or by the discourses now forming.

For the current exhibition, *Archive - Practice* presents an initial collection by three pairs of pages from a book that doesn't exist yet, set within a dialog that does.

Art of Failure - Nicolas Maigret & Nicolas Montgermont

A/V Permutations, online audiovisual installation, 7' 12", 2008

<http://artoffailure.free.fr/>

Art of Failure is a duo of the French artists Nicolas Maigret and Nicolas Montgermont. They describe their works as "shiftings or transpositions of geologic data towards the vinyl release or from the medical computing towards the live performances - from a concept to the plastic field. These diversions highlight problems and aesthetics peculiar to contemporary technologies." *A/V Permutations* is an audiovisual installation that uses Internet as a resonant space. It borrows an image from the psychodiagnostic of Rorschach. In this piece, the image is sent on Internet and returns in the exhibition's space, then is sent back again. This cycle is reproduced ad infinitum. These permutations are disrupted by the hazards of online transmission and the interferences created by Internet users. Along the way, the audio and the visual elements get modified until it reaches a complete restructuring. As a resonant space, the network exhibits what seems to be an autonomous and undetermined behavior. At each cycle end the unavoidable transmission of the immaterial message within the virtual space provides a unique image in the exhibition space. Each image suggests "free associations" such as a hybrid psychic language combining the soul of the machine with our mental projections.

Denis Carrier & Pied la Biche

Collaboration with the curators for the graphic design and the display of the exhibition.

<http://www.studiofolk.com/> & <http://piedlabiche.wordpress.com/>

The curators have chosen to collaborate on two correlated levels: the "plan" and the "space" of the exhibition. Based on the arguments defended by the curators, Denis Carrier (graphic designer) conceived the layout and the visual elements for the documentation, while Pied la Biche (collective of architects) conceived the plan and the furnitures for the display.

Season18.com, the first public section of the project is displayed at the entrance of the room. It acts as a starting point by allowing the public to read the previous researches available online. It also operates as a vanishing point which defines the perspective lines determining the shape of the furnitures designed for the exhibition. As the visitor comes closer to the Exhibition space, a blue gradient appears on top of the walls. Originally defining the project's identity on the "plan" level, the repetition of this element within the "space" level emphasizes the notion of transition.

Season 18 has been invited to develop its project for the forthcoming Lyon Biennale.

L'École du Magasin is an international curatorial training program developed by Le Magasin, Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble (France). The one year long formation is aimed for participants of varied backgrounds (Art studies, History of Art, Philosophy, Social sciences...) and centered on a research process leading to a collective project.

<http://www.ecoledumagasin.com/>