

MAGASIN

Centre National d'Art Contemporain

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The Whole World Is Watching

Exhibition and online project curated by Session 21 of the École du Magasin:

Shoghig Halajian, Corrado Salzano and Sarah Sandler

Under the tutorial of Fareed Armaly

Exhibition from 03/06 to 02/09/2012

Opening Saturday 2 June at 6pm



Vidéogazette poster (detail), serigraphy, 1973, © Patrick di Meglio

Pierre Bismuth, Natalie Bookchin, Richard Serra, Vidéogazette, and new commissions by Pierre Musso, Gail Pickering, Journal of Aesthetics and Protest, and The Public School Philadelphia.

In August 1968 anti-war demonstrators chanted “the whole world is watching” outside the Democratic National Convention in Chicago as TV cameras broadcast images of police brutality into private homes. This now iconic slogan urgently demanded access to information in order to monitor social injustices and ensure the rights of citizens. Taking its title from this moment in history, *The Whole World is Watching* investigates notions of transparency and accountability that underlie the communication technologies at our disposal.

The Whole World is Watching stems from research into the history of Vidéogazette (1973-1976), a collective of activists and technicians who taught citizens in the newly built suburb of Villeneuve, Grenoble, how to use audiovisual equipment and produce their own television channel. In the early 70's, Villeneuve and its experimental urban plan presented a model of co-habitation and communal life that attracted activists and filmmakers. In this context, the members of Vidéogazette took charge of the means of information production and played an active role in the local democracy. Vidéogazette claimed a political stake in the attempt to decentralise media channels and transform the role of the spectator into that of a producer. Despite the initial enthusiasm around the project, only a small number of inhabitants remained involved. Objections about who leads and determines the programs ultimately challenged the underlying premise of Vidéogazette.

Today the Internet creates a virtual architecture for social exchange and mobility, reinforcing Vidéogazette's model of open communication. Interactive online platforms render information and knowledge accessible, and broaden the concept of “local communities” by connecting individuals around the world. Recently a re-politicisation of technological tools emerges in different contexts by movements demanding democracy – from the Spanish Indignados to Occupy Wall Street – proposing a belief in the active participation of citizens. They emphasise the role of social media to spread a counter point of view, and combine the communicative functions of existing social networks with the political functions of assemblies. These events re-surface questions about who leads and engages in the decision-making process, problematising our use of technologies and our position as both consumers and producers.

Modelled after Vidéogazette's broadcasting studio "Agora", *The Whole World is Watching* transforms MAGASIN's auditorium into an exhibition space and brings together a selection from the Vidéogazette print and video archives with a series of related video works: **Richard Serra** borrows the news teleprompter format to critique popular media, embodying the spirit of a generation of artists who, in the 70's, contested the traditional passivity of the viewer; **Pierre Bismuth's** installation appropriates a similar strategy to activate the role of the spectator, ultimately revealing the limits of this approach; **Natalie Bookchin's** video installation collects hundreds of YouTube clips to ironically criticise the myth of the Internet as an ideal communication model of interaction and social exchange. Taking the Vidéogazette archives as a starting point, **Gail Pickering** revisits traces and fragments of this history to produce a specially commissioned work. **Journal of Aesthetics and Protest, The Public School Philadelphia**, and media theorist **Pierre Musso** contribute a roundtable of different perspectives on the role of technology in collective life, considering the Network both as a practical tool to organise multiple voices and a conceptual model that informs how we even think about organising. These works will be published online before the opening, and later translated into the exhibition space.

Together, the works offer multiple points of entry into the collective space defined by technology in its contrasting characteristics: a self-determined community where individuals join together, a cacophonous collection of isolated and atomised voices, a territory claimed by centralised corporate and State power, and a laboratory for possible future scenarios.

Our sincerest thank you to Fareed Armaly and Lore Gablier for their guidance and generosity throughout the entirety of this project. The collaboration was truly inspiring.

A special acknowledgement to Patrick di Meglio for donating his personal archive of posters to the exhibition, and Denis Réquillart, Jean Leclercq and Honoré Parise for eloquently sharing their experiences of Vidéogazette with us. Thank you to Claude Schulhof who wrote an insightful doctorate thesis on Vidéogazette at the University of Grenoble.

Website designed by Pierre Boggio, Manon Bruet and Virginie Gauthier.

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The École du MAGASIN is a curatorial training program, one of the activities of the art center the MAGASIN in Grenoble, France. Established in 1987, The École was set up to provide a professional (institutional) environment for a rigorous combination of research and practice.

More info: www.ecoledumagasin.com

The participants to Session 21 (2011-2012) and curators of the exhibition are:

Shoghig Halajian (b. 1981, United States)

Corrado Salzano (b. 1983, Italy)

Sarah Sandler (b. 1983, Australia)

// AT MAGASIN - Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble

Isabelle Cornaro - Exhibition from 03/06 to 02/09/2012

For this exhibition, French artist Isabelle Cornaro will question the notions of perspective, point of view and positioning. She will stage familiar objects which, when they are integrated into a composition, take on a new meaning and a new value. She will show how means of representation, historically and culturally determined, influence our perception of the world.

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