

## Origins of the Commons Service Group

We are the Commons Service Group, a curatorial group composed of Heather Anderson (anglophone Canadian), Jerome Grand (Franco American) and Julia Maier (French). We are the three participants of Session 14 of the Ecole du MAGASIN, an international curatorial training program at the Centre National d'Art Contemporain in Grenoble (France). The Ecole is part of the Magasin's programming, and for ten months each year hosts a small team of participants selected through an application process.

The development of the Commons Service Group as a curatorial project commenced in the first trimester with research on free publications and their critical potential. This led us to an interrogation of "the free", gift economies, sharing, and "putting into common". In the process of our research, we encountered on the one hand cultural concerns surrounding the expanding application of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS, an agreement of the World Trade Organization, WTO), and on the other hand projects and movements working towards the sharing of knowledge and artistic production: notably Open Source software movements on the Internet, Creative Commons, Indymédia, Wikipédia, etc.

It is at the intersection of these questions that we have chosen to locate our curatorial project. We have given ourselves the mandate of informing the contemporary art field about the significance of the GATS, and also sharing knowledge about projects that function move in the opposite direction. It is because we have undertaken this mandate that we thought it necessary to constitute the Commons Service Group. This group becomes author of a context, and responsible for assuring the circulation of information via modes of dissemination and "inservention".

Our project is a conceptual one: information on the GATS becomes working material on both political and aesthetic levels. This project is deployed across multiple phases and supports. In inviting artists and publications to collaborate with us in "aesthetic maneuvers", we first undertook to share information about the significance of the GATS. We invited the artists to make a contribution based in their own practice, choosing not to demand that they address the GATS specifically, as that is the mission we have taken on board as the Commons Service Group.

You can find more information on the Commons Service Group project on the Announcement page of the project:

Notes:

The site of Session 14 of the Ecole du Magasin presents central elements of research and production: <http://www.ecoledumagasin.com/sessionencours/session14>.

The Commons Service Group web site comprises one of the elements of our curatorial project. <http://www.ecoledumagasin.com/csg>