

Season 18

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Episode 00 | Pilot

Statement

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Previously, we received an institutional demand from le Magasin to take part in 2009 Lyon Biennial curated by Catherine David. We had a meeting with Mrs. David at the beginning of November, during which she briefly introduced the objectives of the upcoming biennial. After this meeting, she suggested a bibliography which provided us a theoretical framework to start working on something concrete. Since the number of unknown variants concerning our participation to the 2009 Lyon Biennial remains crucial, we decided to make the following proposition.

After several internal meetings and a workshop with Fareed Armaly, instead of working either on various independant projects or an anonymous group project, we have taken the decision to work on a dynamic and collective project. We see the collective project as a collection of individual propositions tending towards a shared purpose.

We have decided to entitle this collective project *Season 18*. A season is defined as a recurrent period characterized by certain occurrences. It is also a common terminology used to define a set of episodes by a television series, a definition we feel close to. Indeed, even though we come from different countries, television series are a commonplace for all of us and we believe this is a down to earth evidence demonstrating they play an important role in the cultural globalization process. Besides, we see l'Ecole du Magasin as a cyclic structure - *same same but different* - annually (re)defined by a casting, diverse actors, directors, scripts and settings, just like a season of a television series.

We would like to put the emphasis on this characteristic process by selecting a seasonal structure holding seven episodes: six individual propositions belonging to the main framework, directed by one of the participants focusing on a particular topic and a collective season finale, last in the series, as the conclusion to the plot.

Each director will work on a script in parallel to the others. Each script will be a work in progress, in regards with current situations and different commissions, available to the audience on the Internet during the entire season. The season will begin with a first episode on the 2nd of February and a new episode will be announced on the season's official page every three weeks. The season finale - a collective conclusion which might be incorporated in the 2009 Lyon Biennial - remains currently undefined as it will be the result of the first six episodes.

So far, as you can see in the following pages, the main plot is articulated around the spaces of gaps/transitions/zones with an emphasis on fiction/narratives/stories, regarding both political contexts and historical identities.

We hope this new season will be as interesting and intriguing as the previous sessions of l'Ecole du Magasin, bringing new propositions through a dynamic and collective process.

Episode 01

Intervening points

Dir. Marianna Hovhannisyan | m.hovhannisyan@ecolemagasin.com

The phenomena of interruption in the history of different societies could appear as a reaction towards existing social, cultural and political situations in order to interrogate and change the notions of the status and identity.

Significance to discover an interruption becomes more visible and necessary when we try to write a history in the case of fragmented histories. But how it is possible to re-write and re-consider certain historical elements in order to avoid the endless reanimation of the past? Maybe comparably the exploration of the local situations can provide new perceptions and instruments to work with these fragmented histories and interruptions?

Regarding these questions I am currently interested in the intervening points of artistic practices, behaviors and especially gestures in the process of creating archives, collecting the stories and witnesses. In the scope of my episode, I will focus on specifying an interruption as a part of a history, even more as reconsideration of identity, heritage and its relation with young generation.

I consider developing my project by interviewing some art theoreticians, artists and curators from countries (mostly from the Post-Soviet countries) which have experienced specific social-political situations and there is a gap, lack of transmissions, etc. trying to find similarities or differences in comparison with the countries from Western Europe.

From the introduction for Lyon Biennale 2009 made by Catherine David the specific developments of French immigration history, the movement originated from the demonstration of "la Marche des Beurs" (1983), motivated me to pay attention on the crucial role of interruption which occurs between ideas and utopias. In the case of Armenia, I could consider one of the types of interruptions the importance of 60's as a rise of national movements, remains crucial in sense of having the consciousness of historical moment (during the Soviet Union).

References:

- "Imaging the past", Hrach Bayadyan
- "The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference", "Coloniality at Large: Knowledge at the Late Stage of the Modern/Colonial World System", "[Progressive Nostalgias](#)", Walter D. Mignolo
- Adieu Parajanov", *Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Armenien*, 2003,
- [Institut Européen pour des politiques culturelles en devenir](#)
- [La marche des Beurs](#), Wikipedia

Episode 02

Art & Transmission

Dir. Elodie Dufour | e.dufour@ecolemagasin.com

I would like to focus my research on the notion of transmission as introduced as a keyword by Catherine David in the framework of the biennale of Lyon 2009.

I'm interested in it because it includes the mental structure of the transmitter/receptor as the movement from which depends the context (social, political, historical) and the content.

We can also define "transmission" from its latin roots; from the verb "transmittere" which is feminine in that definition, and means a movement of transportation.¹

Catherine Perret,² a French philosopher makes a hypothesis on the definition of transmission as the idea of a passage and a transformation to another dimension. Can this notion say something about the difference between mediation and identification?

She continues in the idea of "art as a function for the collective identifications" and how as an operator, art allows the transmission even more than the transmission of art. She defines art as "social function to (re)produce the possibilities of a collective experience" in the movement of identification.

It seems that we are going through a time of crisis concerning the transmission as held by tradition. Art would have the capacity to propose collective experiences and introduces a possibility of a structuration inside the society? Then in what way would the new artistic representations (ways of exhibitions, audience, changing in the institutions) allow collective representations? Also, concerning the question of collective representation, how effective is the impact of "new techniques of production of images"?²

In her projects "Passing Drama"⁴ and "Timescapes"⁵ Angelita Melitopoulos⁴ introduces the relationship between representations and the collective process of subjectivation. "Passing Drama" is an "acoustic image" of her family story and "Timescapes" is a concept of the video project developed from "Passing Drama". Timescapes investigates the aesthetics of non-linear film montage as collaborative processes among video authors from different countries in western and southeastern Europe.

In the article "before the representation" an idea of the psychologist Sherry Turkle into the relationship between subject and technology. According to S. Turkle, the computer has "a second nature as an evocative object, as an object that fascinates, disturbs our composure, and propels our thinking towards new horizons. The computer is ...psychological machine... because it influences how we think about ourselves ..."

"Timescapes interprets the "entry of the living into the audio-visual story" as a positive possibility for representing the politics of representation themselves as a process through exploring collective processes of subjectivation".

I would like to study more deeply this artistic projects as it can ask the notion the representation which could allow memory. Angelita Melitopoulos proposes a developpement about the social function of art as it can permit transmission?

In the introduction of the exhibition "transmission"⁶ (Villa Arson, Nice, France, 2006) Sylvie Boulanger⁷ asks the question what can be transmitted or not be in the practice of the art?³

Notes:

- (1) Encyclopédie française - Dictionnaire de l'académie française 8th edition (1932)
- (2) "Art et transmission - introduction Séminaire du Centre Georges Pompidou", Catherine Perret
As a bibliographical reference, I read the text from a seminar about "L'art et la transmission" given by the Direction scientifique of the seminary in Centre Georges Pompidou.(avril 2005- novembre 2005)
- (3) Introduction, Sylvie Boulanger, in *Multitudes* Hors Serie N°1
- (4) "[Avant la représentation](#)". Images vidéo en tant qu'agents dans "Passing Drama" et "TIMESCAPES", Angela Melitopoulos, traduit par Yasemin Vaudable
- (5) "[TIMESCAPES](#)": It is a collaborative non-linear montage project (with Hito Steyerl, VI.DEA_Media Collective Ankara, Dragana Zarevac and Freddy Viannelis) within the research project "Transcultural Geographies" by and with Ursula Biemann, Lisa Parks and Ginette Verstraete.
- (6) "Transmission", Villa Arson, Nice, 2006.
Artists : Edouard Boyer, Etienne Chambaud, Jeremy Deller, Christophe Fiat, Stéphane Magnin, Joseph Mouton, le Poïpoïdrome de Filliou et Pfeufer, Yan Sérandour, Bruno Serralongue, Temporary Services, Tensta Konsthall.
- (7) Sylvie Boulanger, Director of the Centre National de l'estampe et de l'art imprimé, Chatou, France.

Episode 03

Koreanness as the identity of Korean Contemporary Art in postcolonial era

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Koreanness of contemporary art is relevant to post-eurocentrality and globalism that has been formed since the late 20th century. And these ideologies are closely linked with discourse of the humanities, social sciences and political issues which are caused by disintegration of superiority and the emergence of peripheries. In historical context, postcolonialism behaves as a subdivision within the cultural studies the theory of literature and criticism that includes Marxist, Gramscian, Foucauldian, and Feminist. As scholastic discourse, postcolonialism began with Edward Said's writings of *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Although Said focused on literature in this critics, it is worthy of referring as a starting point of postcolonial discourse.

Postcolonial era is really here, however, materialization of postcolonialism is often conflict with ideal in Non-Western countries because this discourse came from Western-European countries. Korea has experienced a political intervention of Japan from 1910 to 1945. That's quite of another shoes with Western-European postcolonialism because, according to geographical position, Korea lies to the west of Japan they are located in the same continent as Asia. So Western-European postcolonialism tends to outside of them on the contrary Korean focuses on inside, there are two different access routes, which one is nationalism and another is globalism.

For nationalism, pointing out the legacies of colonial rule and Zainichi it means Korean diaspora in Japan and their culture. During the colonial period, Koreans living on both the Japanese archipelago and the Korean peninsula were Japanese imperial subjects. We should mention that [Lee U-fan](#) as a typical Zainichi artist, he was born in 1936 in Korea, but he is well known as Japanese minimalism painter and sculptor. Lee U-fan wrote plenty of art theories and criticisms despite his nationality: Korean. As an artist who created works of art along with studying at theory, he exploited the essence of traditional Korean painting and its spirit, but he didn't forget to introduce critics on art and culture that contributed the foundation of Western-European art. In his viewpoint, the traditional modernism art is simply the objectification of ideas and the configuration of forms.

Globalism bring on a new vision of Korea as postcolonial culture with international events, such as Olympics (1988) and Biennials. Gwangju biennale is the notable example of Korean contemporary art event, it started in 1995. It was an important starting point of inside and outside of Korea because it is not only as the first contemporary art biennale in Asia but also the political spot with democracy movement, which erupted on the streets of the city of Gwangju in May 1980. Through the concept of Gwangju biennale recently held in 2006 and in 2008, we can consider Korean contemporary art under the influence of postcolonialism point of view. In 2006, with title "Fever Variations", the 6th Gwangju Biennale takes today's art in Asia as its theme. Especially in a period when Asia's changing energy and dynamic vision are expanding and disseminating worldwide, provoking a shift of the center in the world-system. The Biennale pictures Asia as an active subject, not as an "the others" object, reinterpreting and reconstructing contemporary art from the perspective of Asian contemporary art.¹ In 2008, the 7th Gwangju biennale designated around three interconnected components of the exhibition structure. The first part "On the Road" is a report on recent exhibitions that have occurred or exhibited elsewhere between 2007 and 2008. The second part "Position Papers" is a platform dedicated to the curatorial proposals and experiments in exhibition making by emerging curators. The last part is "Insertions", it takes the format of a limited series of new projects commissioned specifically for Gwangju biennale. The principal logic of 7th Gwangju biennale has no thematic framework. Instead, it is comprised of a series of selected traveling exhibitions invited to use the biennale as a destination, a stop on the touring itinerary in the global exhibition network.²

Through these late Gwangju biennales, we can find that interesting facts that artistic director of 6th event is Korean curator Kim Hong-Hee and 7th is foreign curator Okwui Enwezor, but the former biennale focused on the world contemporary art in eyes of Korean but the later based on the reality in Korean contemporary art with foreign or out side point of view. But one of the clear subject from the complex layering these two biennales emerged problems of identity and ongoing debate about with constitutes 'Koreanness'. And this subject pose an enigma to current theories of postcolonialism which from thought of American-European but considering of third space, therefore we can consider about that Koreanness repeats itself as kind of expanding national identity to show reflecting of traditional memory and reality in our times.

Notes:

- (1) Kim Hong-hee, *The 6th Gwangju Biennale 2006 and The Problematics of Identity in Visual Art*, 2006
- (2) [7th Gwangju biennial Press Release](#), 2008

Episode 04

Transit Zone and Hi[S]tory, space and time in between

Dir. Diane Pigeau | d.pigeau@ecolemagasin.com

“Been there and back to nowhere” - Ursula Biemann

For one of the six episodes inside Season 18, I will start from chronotope (time/space) and criteria of visibility and experimentality in the area of transit zone as a geographic space and time in between to History and stories.

Considering this, both Walter Mignolo's and Brian Holmes' texts¹ were significant in my researches as well as the project initiated by the artist Ursula Biemann "B-Zone : becoming Europe and Beyond".

In another way I read more about the notion of chronotope as it was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin in the field of literature in the 20s and how it was used by the cultural theorist and critic [Mieke Bal](#) recently.

I made some researches in her background and fields of interest. Besides the fact she wrote articles, books, art catalogs and essays, she is also a video artist and a curator involved in the questions of travel, migratory aesthetics. I came across for the second time on a project where Ursula Biemann was involved. The project is [2move. Double Movement Migratory Aesthetic](#) around 17 videos artists works.

All these entries brought me to focus on borders, as physical and mental image and then the specificity and the ambiguity of “Transit Zone”.

The transit zone creates its own reality through control access, identity, time and space. It contains its own time and spatial dynamic, which shape the individual's experience and is engaged with globalized world. The transit zone exists between borders, outside of any nation-state. But the transit zone also contains ambivalence as mobility, immobility, space of control, space of economic exchange. It can appear to control the flux of bodies, economy, but also informations on the net space.

And in another way of thinking, it's a transition area, as a “rite of passage” with three phases : separation, transition and incorporation.

From this point I will focus on artistic works and forms which have an interest in exploring issues related to history and politics through narratives in order to view history through stories and to explore the interplay between the personal and the collective, the objective and the subjective, archives, documentaries and fictions.

References:

- Brian Holmes, Ursula Biemann – *The Maghred connection movements of life across North Africa* – 2006
- Ursula Biemann « Been there and back to nowhere », b_books Berlin, 2000
- *2move – Double Movement Migratory Aesthetic*: Collective exhibition.
- *Transit*: Taysir Batniji - 2004 (7/11-9/01) at Witte de With, Rotterdam.
- *Transit Zone*: Mike Nelson - Ania Rachmat - Erlend Williamson – 1996 at W139, Amsterdam.
- [Translocal practices: Artistic Practices in Networked Spaces](#), Institut für Kunst & Medien, Zurich.

Artists works:

Chantal Ackerman - Francis Alÿs (The Loop - 1997) - Ursula Biemann - Beatrice Catanzaro - Diller & Scofidio (*Jet Lag* - 1998) - Alfredo Jaar - Elena Nemkova - Adrian Paci (*Temporary Shelter Centre*, 2007) - Florian Pugnare (*Komedya*, 2007) - Mark Wallinger (*Threshold to the Kingdom* - 2000) - Clemens von Wedemeyer (*From Across the Way*, 2007).

Notes:

- (1) “[The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference](#)”, Walter Mignolo, in *Multitudes* no. 6, autumn 2001
“[Differential geography](#)”, Brian Holmes, in *Multitudes* no. 28, spring 2007

Episode 05

Tactical networks & simulations

Dir. Tolga Taluy | t.taluy@ecolemagasin.com

The percentage of internet usage in the Middle East is comparable to the rest of the world: roughly 20% of population is currently connected. If we take a closer look to the statistics, an interesting fact appears promptly. The use growth in this region is tremendous, reaching more than 1100% since 2000. This number represents the biggest use growth in the world during the last few years, closely followed by Africa (approximatively 1000%). If we go through details, we see an extraordinary use growth in countries such as Iran (9100%), Syria (7000%), Saudi Arabia (3000%), Yemen (2000%), Qatar (1000%) and Palestine (900%)¹.

The recent changes in the use of the web that aim to enhance creativity, communications, secure information sharing, collaborations, functionality and the development & evolution of web-culture communities & hosted services, such as social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs and folksonomies² are constantly modifying specific approaches and shifting global visions. In some cases, either these mainstream technologies are hacked or new systems are built upon existing structures to create effective sociopolitical propositions.

Another interesting point is the increasing number of homebrew video games. Theories that examine games as an artistic medium are a relatively recent development in the humanities. In the field of narratology, video games are considered as a storytelling medium in which we become another person and act out in another world.³ One of the most popular genres in the video game culture is the wargame, a game that represents military operations, which are oftenly called conflict simulations or consims for short. A general consensus exists that such games must explore and illuminate or simulate some feature or aspect of human behaviour directly bearing on the conduct of war, even if the game subject itself does not concern organized violent conflict or warfare.⁴

During my episode, I will lead two parallel projects: the first one titled "tactical networks" will focus on the use of online communities as a tool of political commitment and social influence in the Middle East; the second one titled "tactical simulations" will focus on a comparative studies of virtual displays and narratives between Western blockbuster and Middle Eastern microproduction wargames. In my opinion, these two topics share the same roots, a general spread of technology by extension, certainly backed by the drop of both hardware and bandwidth prices. For both, I will try to create a subjective state of the art index which will be articulated by the offline and online interventions commissioned to the main actors in these fields.

Notes:

- (1) <http://www.internetworldstats.com/>
- (2) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0
- (3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_games
- (4) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wargaming>

Episode 06

Tellings

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I started to work on Catherine David questioning the nowadays aesthetic production act and the limits of both the field and the role of art. Besides, Mrs David announced the Biennial would focus on the notion of “transmission” and refuted the idea of “emergence” (of artistic scenes) as a kind of spontaneous generation.

The purpose of my work was then to investigate the narrative forms under which memory is shared. In so doing, I focused on fictions and stories told in artworks.

I have been interested in the notion of memory as a duty (the so-called “devoir de mémoire”) which has been developed in France in the 80s, basically to tell the youth of this time - my generation - to remember the disaster of the Shoah. Despite the fact that the relevance of this notion itself is still the subject of a debate, more or less appropriate initiatives aiming at fulfilling this duty regularly appear (for instance in 2007 with the French president's proposition to make all French pupils read the last letter of Guy Môquet¹).

The analysis of this example led me to think about the transition between a private and intimate space and the scale of a community. How the witness of a personal drama could catch the attention and the empathy much more than the reading of crimes against humanity in the every day's newspapers²?

In parallel to this idea of transmission through witness, the evolution of means for recording and diffusing these witnesses went in the way of their democratisation, same than for art and cinema.

Nowadays, open letters overload forums, blogs, or websites such as Youtube. Interactivity involved by softwares allows dialogues and the possibility to build narrative schemes including *possibles*, such as choices in the curious objects called “webdocumentaries”, kinds of “gonzo” video games.

I propose to focus on works that deal with the “telling” and the way exhibition displays deliver a context for these.

The montage leads narration in some Harun Farocki documentaries where none other kind of comment appears. In Alain Della Negra and Kaori Kinoshita's video “Neighbourhood”, people relate the strange adventures of their Sim's avatars' at the first person. On another hand, Eija-Liisa Ahtila's uses projection as a way to juxtapose points of view in her “human dramas”.

The paradoxical research to provide the viewer a feeling of *immediacy* while sharing with him/her/them a memory or even, an experience, was linked to the need of obtaining the adhesion of this viewer³.

It became now, with everybody's habit of its technical possibility, the ground of interrogations of the status of the image, the text, the document it serves.

Bibliography:

- *Des documents poétiques*, Franck Leibovici, Al Dante/Transbordeurs, Questions théoriques/collection Forbidden Beach, Paris, 2007.
- “[Art et politique dans les années 1990](#)”, Jean-Philippe Uzel, in *Identités narratives – mémoire et perception*, PU Laval, Intercultures, Quebec, 2003.
- “[La création dans son moment contemporain: temps et récit](#)”, Pascale Cassagnau, texte of the conference of the 05/03/2008 at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.
- “[Ni banalisation, ni sacralisation. Du bon et du mauvais usage de la mémoire](#)”, Tzevetan Todorov, in *Le Monde diplomatique*, April 2001.
- “[Renée Green : tactiques de l'histoire](#)”, Giovanna Zapperi, in *Multitudes*, n°34, autumn 2008.

Notes:

- (1) http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-10-22-1327079758_x.htm
See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_M%C3%B4quet
- (2) The popularity of the *Diary* of another very young victim, Ann Frank, is another example.
- (3) The recent movie *Je veux voir* by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige was displaying a road-trip in Lebanon involving Rabih Mroué and the French monument Catherine Deneuve. When the camera would show looks exchanges between some passers-by and Catherine Deneuve, it would itself - the only way the spectator could feel their eyes stuck on her/him.

Episode 07 | Finale

Untitled

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