

# MAGASIN

Centre National d'Art Contemporain

Press release / May 2012

## *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.

## // ARTISTS & ARTWORKS //

**PIERRE BISMUTH's** work is firmly inscribed in the legacy of conceptual art, which he critically re-evaluates and re-actualizes, passing beyond a general post-conceptualist trend in contemporary art. Through a quasi-scientific inquiry into method, a persistent critical analysis of contemporary forms of culture, the use of performative gestures and an interest into the everyday, Bismuth reworks conceptual art's original complexity investigates recent evolutions in the mechanisms of society and culture. His work has been extensively exhibited for the past twenty years. Notable places include the British Film Institute in London, the Kunsthalle in Basel, Villa Arson in Nice, Witte de With Rotterdam in Rotterdam, MAMCO in Geneva, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and the ICA in London.

*Technological development - part 1 /Technological development is for the time being Mankind's only future* (2011) is a real-time closed circuit television installation that requires visitors' participation. The piece stages a text written by Bismuth that discusses the topics of work, production and technology, and critiques the way they have set the functional mode of our contemporary existence. While the viewer is reading this text from the prompter, a video camera channels his/her image in real-time onto a TV screen, where a satellite view of the weather forecast is projected in the background. The banality of the background image neutralises the political resonance of the text, highlighting the way in which technological tools mediate even our most earnest .

**NATALIE BOOKCHIN** explores new forms of documentary, addressing conditions of mass connectivity and isolation. Her video installations are often composed from scores of clips from YouTube and other Internet video-logs. Previous video works address current social events and phenomena including joblessness, mood-stabilising drugs and, most recently, media scandals around African American men. Her work has been exhibited widely, including at LACMA and MOCA in Los Angeles, Whitney Museum, PS1 and Creative Time in New York, the Generali Foundation in Austria, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and the Tate in London.

*Mass Ornament* (2009) is a video installation in which hundreds of clips from YouTube of people dancing alone in their rooms are edited together to create a large dance with waves of synchronised movement. The title recalls Siegfried Kracauer's 1927 essay on mass ornament, which argued that the disciplined and coordinated movement of The Tiller Girls, a popular dance troupe of the 1900s, reflected the movement of assembly-line workers in the factory and the logic of a Fordist production system. Bookchin's line of dancers embodies the Digital Age, which has brought the communal public setting into private homes, now contained within the disembodied and isolated online environment. Just as rows of spectators once sat in theaters watching dancers in formation, today millions of viewers sit alone in front of their computers watching individuals dance alone in their rooms.

**JOURNAL OF AESTHETICS AND PROTEST** is a Los Angeles based artists' collective which sits at the discursive juncture of fine art, media theory and anti-authoritarian activism. Working collaboratively with individuals and collectives on several continents, JOAAP publishes a journal and organizes projects to challenge hegemonic representations (of knowledge, art, activism) and spark situations for community-based social change. While they publish critical theory, they have no ties to any academic or cultural institution.

*New commission:* Contributing to the online project conceived in conjunction to the exhibition, Journal of

Aesthetics and Protest presents the *Dispatch Project*, an interview-based research that investigates the internal dynamics of the Occupy Movements. Inspired by Paulo Freire's theory of popular education, JOAAP organizes a group of researchers in New York, Oakland, and Illinois to offer interviews and reports on the protests. In doing so, they examine the way individuals respond to an occupation's contexts in order to better understand the challenges, contradictions and knowledges learned within a growing movement.

**PIERRE MUSSO** is a researcher and theorist in telecommunications and broadcasting. He holds a Philosophy diploma, a doctorate in political science, and is a professor of Information and Communication Sciences at Télécom ParisTech and Rennes 2 University. He currently holds the Chair of teaching and research, "Modélisation des imaginaires, innovation et création", and is the author of numerous books, including *Réseaux et société* (PUF, 2003); *Critique des réseaux* (PUF, 2003); *Territoires et cyberspace en 2030* (La Documentation Française/DATAR, 2008); *Saint-Simon, l'industrialisme contre l'Etat* (La Tour d'Aigues, Editions de l'Aube, 2010).

*New commission:* Considering the shift from the post-68 communication model to the new media, Pierre Musso contributes a new essay addressing the Western Occupy movement's emphasis on social media and horizontal organisation through the framework of what he describes as the "ideology of the network".

**THE PUBLIC SCHOOL PHILADELPHIA** is a collectively organised school that hosts a series of free experimental courses, much of which convene at Basecamp, an art space in the city centre of Philadelphia. The Public School Philadelphia is a localized effort that is one of a number of autonomously operating schools under The Public School model. Using an interactive website for each location, The Public School operates as follows: classes are proposed online by the public; people have the opportunity to sign up for the classes through each location's site; when enough people have expressed interest, the school finds a teacher and offers the class at a designated location. Since its launch in 2009, notable courses at The Public School Philadelphia include *Storytelling with Dennis Strain*, *Playing Making Recording*, *Vagabondism*, *Creating a Community Museum*, and *The Lendry*.

*New commission:* Using an open source web platform to organise and promote courses, [The Public School Philadelphia](#) present a series of class proposals and visual accompaniment that address alternative modes of education outside of the academic institution. They take Vidéogazette's educational workshops as inspiration and explore ways one can initiate a self-education process that allows students to re-imagine—and decide—how one can learn and engage. Contributors include members of the Basecamp team, Michael G. Bauer, Lizzy Devita, Scott Rigby, among others.

**GAIL PICKERING's** work can be seen as a layering of fictions, constructed and sourced through specific sites as well as historical and political events. Her performance and video works often function as social proposals that employ various kinds of collaborations with amateur and professional actors, dancers and speakers. Her recent commission for the British Art Show 7, *Sixty Six Signs of Neon* (2010-11), consisted of a series of performances broadcast live from a remote studio to various locations in London, Glasgow, Nottingham and Plymouth. She has exhibited at the Tate Modern, South London Gallery and Gasworks in London, Galerie Jousse Entrepris in Paris, RLBQ Gallery in Marseille, and Angstrom Gallery in Los Angeles.

*New commission:* Gail Pickering produces a new installation, *Not Yet, No Longer*, takes the Vidéogazette history and archives as its starting point. Drawing from her interest in social and political dissident groups, Pickering re-considers the initial impetus behind the project in today's context by collaborating with SLUM TV, a grassroots media organization that produces television programs with the local inhabitants of Mathare, a large slum in Nairobi, Kenya. SLUM TV produces the telenovella film, 'The Kids Are The Kings'. Set in Mathare, the film literally embeds Vidéogazette archive images into the film's narrative. To further explore the Vidéogazette story, Pickering also collaborates with Patrick de Meglio, Vidéogazette's original graphic designer, to specially design a poster announcing the SLUM TV film. By appropriating archival material and incorporating them into multiple collaborations, Pickering offers a reflection on the legacy of Vidéogazette's philosophy and its contemporary trajectories.

**RICHARD SERRA** is well known for his large-scale minimalist sculptural work, which has its roots in the process art of the 1960s. Like other artists of his generation, he also worked extensively with and video—producing several films before making videotapes in the early 70s. Early videos include *Dilemma* (1974) and *Boomerang* (1974), two structural examinations of the medium as a vehicle for communication. Serra has made a number of films concerning the manufacture of his favorite material, steel, all of which are currently housed at the Guggenheim Bilbao. His recent major exhibitions include the drawing retrospective "Work comes out of work" at the Kunsthau Bregenz (2008), the eight-part permanent installation *The Matter of Time* at the Guggenheim Bilbao (2005), and "Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years" at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2007).

*Television Delivers People* (1973) critiques commercial television in the United States, highlighting its control by large corporations. The video work pairs mindless elevator music with a scrolling list of statements, referencing the autocue used by news anchors and TV presenters. Borrowing this traditional TV format, Serra describes the manipulative strategies of corporate advertisers embedded in television, in an attempt to reverse the passivity of the viewer.

**VIDÉOGAZETTE** (1973-1976) was a group of activists, technicians and citizens who organized a public access television program in Villeneuve, a neighbourhood located south of Grenoble's city centre. Through state and city funding, the collective offered different services at Villeneuve's audiovisual center, including the production of videos, films and posters; rentals of audiovisual equipment for the locals; and studio courses for primary-school students and adults on multimedia equipment and broadcasting procedures.

Vidéogazette's key aims were to give the inhabitants access to the means of information production and to facilitate continuous education in the local community.

The exhibition will present a selection of the print and video archives of Vidéogazette. A portion of the online project is also dedicated to the Vidéogazette archives and will include first-hand interviews with the former Vidéogazette participants.

*Our sincerest thank you to Fareed Armaly and Lore Gablier for their guidance throughout the entirety of this project. 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.*

*We also cordially thank Yves Aupetitallot and the staff at MAGASIN, Alexandru Balgiu, Dean Inkster, Albertine de Galbert, Naïm Aït-Sidhoum, and Tolga Taluy for all the help.*

*This exhibition was made possible with the support of the Archives de l'Isère and Hélène Viallet, and the Centre d'Étude de la Neige de Saint-Martin d'Hères and Bernard Saulnier.*

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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](http://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)

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// 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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Site Bouchayer-Viallet

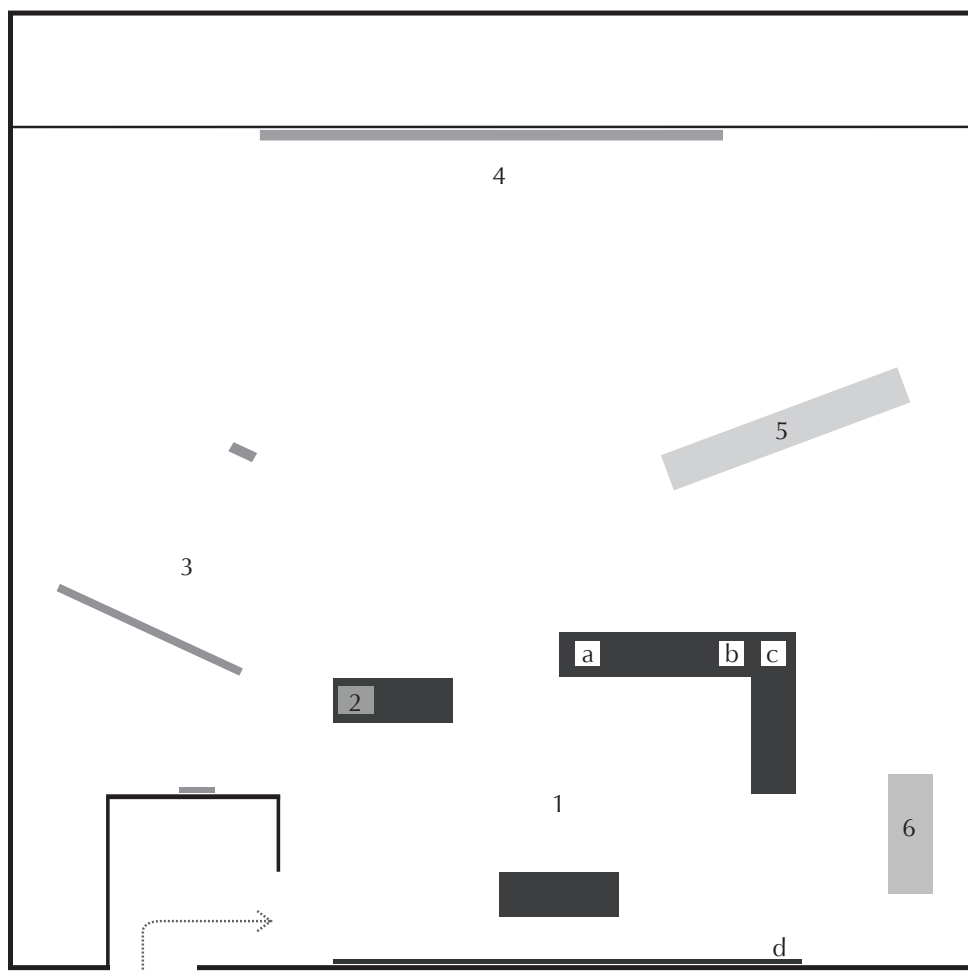
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<http://magasin-cnac.org>

# Le Monde entier observe / The Whole World Is Watching

du 03/06/2012 au 02/09/2012



1. Sélection des archives du Vidéogazette (1973-1976).

a. Extrait d'« Agora », émission télévisée bimensuelle du Vidéogazette.

b. Extrait d'« Agora », émission télévisée bimensuelle du Vidéogazette.

c. Extrait des ateliers menés avec les élèves des écoles de la Villeneuve.

d. Extrait du Film *URBA 2000, épisode 8: Grenoble La Villeneuve Réinventer La Ville*, Michel Régnier.

2. **Richard Serra**, *Television Delivers People* (1973)

Vidéo, 6 min.

3. **Pierre Bismuth**, *Technological Development is for the Time Being Mankind's Only Future* (2011)

Installation vidéo.

4. **Natalie Bookchin**, *Mass Ornament* (2010)

Installation vidéo, 12 min.

5. **Gail Pickering**, *No, Yet, No Longer* (2012)

Installation vidéo, 5 min.

6. [thewholeworldiswatching.fr](http://thewholeworldiswatching.fr)

Le site Internet développé conjointement à l'exposition rassemble des contributions spécifiquement conçues par **Journal of Aesthetics and Protest** (USA), **Pierre Musso** (FR), **The Public School Philadelphia** (USA). Il comprend également une section consacrée à l'histoire du Vidéogazette, ainsi qu'une collection exhaustive de ses archives.

Le site est le fruit d'une collaboration avec trois étudiants du département Design graphique de l'ENBAL : Pierre Boggio, Manon Bruet et Virginie Gauthier. La version française du site sera prochainement mise en ligne.