

MAGASIN

Centre National d'Art Contemporain

«*I lie to them.*» *Based on a true story*

An exhibition and online project by Session 22 of the École du MAGASIN :
Michela Alessandrini, Kanika Anand, Laurie Chappis Peron, Carmen Stolfi, Ekaterina Shcherbakova, Dimitra Tsiaouskoglou

Under the tutelage of Caroline Soyez-Petithomme

From June 9th to September 1st, 2013

Opening on Saturday 8 June at 6pm



- How would you like it if we tried to compose history?
- I would like nothing better. But which?
- Indeed, which?

Gustave Flaubert, *Bouvard et Pécuchet*

I cannot trust quotations.

They always lie, because essentially they are paratruths.

Speak with your own words, clumsy, unconvincing and unintelligible, but yours. And don't forget that every fable is a potential truth.

Anonymous

What moves us, irks us, makes us think, emotive or react? What drives the need to acknowledge a past event or person, a story neglected or silenced, one that is considered unpopular? Can the retelling of marginal histories represent a form of resistance?

The exhibition "*I Lie to Them.*" *Based on a True Story* explores the effectiveness of fiction in re-telling, re-representing and re-enacting traumatic experiences and unofficial histories. The artists blur the boundaries between real and fake, employing strategies of manipulation to create new narratives appropriated from archives, news images or war witness accounts; while questioning both the medium and the source's authenticity. But how do we know what is true if the narration of the story changes every time? The act of retelling presupposes different degrees of comprehension that 'occupy' and control the flow of (hi)story by taking a stand in its construction and production of meaning. As for the gathered artworks, are they simply some other subjective versions added to the plethora of stories used by the authorities or the media? Can their inherent creation processes recall the lies, the alleged truth to which we are exposed almost daily?

In order to comment on or transmit a traumatic experience, such as a war, do we need to have survived or witnessed it? Within the exhibition, the constellation of fragmented narratives refers back to historical tragic events for instance, from the Second World War or the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the current state of fear caused by terrorism or social displacement. Retelling establishes a new relationship with History, and within the context of the exhibition and unfolds on three levels: the disconnection between the actual trauma and the narration of its experience, the (thematic) leveling of historical content of the narratives within the exhibition and the continuing relevance of re-reading these narratives as a reflexive tool that mirrors today's state of precariousness.

// ARTISTS & ARTWORKS //

Agnès Geoffray draws from archival material and media reportage. In the double slide projections *Short Stories* (2011) and the photograph series *Incidental Gestures* (2011), Geoffray deliberately confuses the original source, thereby reiterating the ambiguity between the simulated and the real. *Incidental Gestures* also serves as a means of affording respect and dignity to the protagonists of her stories by way of, for example, clothing a stripped woman who was publically humiliated in the street for disloyalty against the state during the time of the French Liberation (*femmes tondues*). *Testimony* (2009) is a sound and light installation based on the narration of a Hiroshima survivor's experience, poignantly told through sound and light, placing an enigmatic distance in time and space: from the event to today and between the victim and the viewer. The gruesome narration of the survivor's trauma creates an environment of almost devout concentration.



Incidental Gestures, 2011
Production support: CPIF, PontaultCombault
and DRAC IledeFrance

Like Agnes Geoffray, **Riikka Kuoppala** also draws from archives, her narrations reclaim minority voices left behind when a story has made official History as well as make visible traces of past trauma today. In her video, *Under a Burning City* (2010), a grandmother narrates stories from her memories of World War II in Helsinki to her grand-daughter. The script relies upon archival research and interviews with women who experienced the bombings in Helsinki, commenting on the transmission of history through different generations, on the subjective history writing and the construction of national identity.

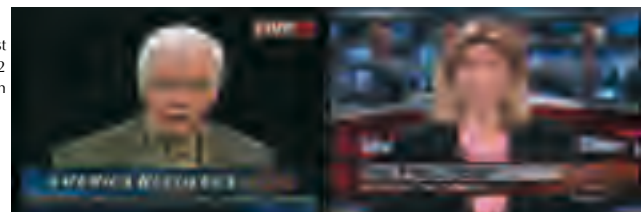


The+Speech+Writer, 2011
Courtesy the Artist and Raking Leaves

Both Bani Abidi and Omer Fast work within the field of documentary-fiction. **Bani Abidi's** *The Speech Writer* (2011) is a fictional documentary presented in the form of ten flip books. The sequences of images follow a day in the life of a retired political speech writer, a man who formulated the rhetoric, visions, dreams and declarations of others. The story revolves around issues of repression and free expression, and how political power and human desires meet. Each flipbook illustrates a scene from one ordinary day revealing the placement of a microphone in his home with numerous loudspeakers occupying the outside wall. In the books, his words fall silent, allowing us to witness a moment of ultimate freedom, and a moment where we can imagine his story.

This silence is counterposed in **Omer Fast's** video *CNN Concatenated* (2002), a compulsive montage of words by television news presenters that transforms media footage into a new narrative through a word, pause or breath each enunciated by a different news presenter. Mimicking mass media, Fast cynically emphasizes the disjuncture in documentary media by splicing and repetition that almost always confounds reality with fiction. The public personalities in the news speak in the first person addressing the spectator directly as 'you', seeming to know his/ her worries, desires and fears.

Omer Fast
CNN Concatenated , 2002
Courtesy of the artist, gb agency, Paris and Arratia Beer, Berlin



David Ter-Oganyan
This not a Bomb (begun 2004, ongoing series)
Courtesy of the artist



Addressing similar phobias and fears constructed in the post 9/11 rhetoric and memory of society, *This is not a bomb* (2013), a series of suggested explosive devices by **David Ter-Oganyan** ludicrously criticizes the way the media continuously assails with images that provoke hysteria and suspiciousness. His work takes a position on the absurdity of current history-making and the need to tell or better still, suggest an alternative version.

An environment of fear mongering, military expansion, and corrupt economic exchange is critiqued by members of the tactical media collective **Critical Art Ensemble** in their filmed performance *Marching Plague* (2006). The work is an exploration into the historical failure of germ warfare programs around the world from the point of view of both military and scientific logic, and questions why the US continues to expand its program in spite of its demonstrated failure. Focusing on the obsolescence of biological warfare, CAE impersonates pseudo-scientists in their comment on the abstraction of fear in the making of a counter-narrative.

Mladen Miljanovic's film *Do you intend to lie to me?* (2011) questions the role of constructed narratives in representing the brutality of life. Therefore the artist documents a fictitious arrest of his Professor and established Bosnian artist, Veso Sovilj. The process of filming is constructed as an intervention in reality, affording the viewer to be privy to Veso's interrogation by a lie detector test that ends with the question "*Is Art Truthful?*"? The theatrical reenactment of violence is a strong comment on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as the power of artist's narration to manipulate reality.

The works reflect the many ways narratives are open to be constructed, deconstructed or manipulated from a variety of sources in contemporary visual culture. The layout of the exhibition space suggests a similar construction of multiple narratives, juxtaposed within the same space.



Mladen Miljanovic
Do You Intend to Lie to Me, 2011
Photo credit: Drago Vejnovic
Production support: Academy of Arts Banja Luka in cooperation
with MQuadrat, Berlin

// ARTISTS BIOGRAPHIES //

Bani Abidi (b. 1971, PAK; lives and works between New Delhi and Berlin) has been working with video for the past eight years. Within the realm of pseudo documentary, her work references national identity, global politics and the fabrication of history. She has exhibited in solo and group shows internationally: *Making Normative Orders – Demonstrations of Power, Doubt and Protest*, Frankfurter Kunstverein (2012); *Where Three Dreams Cross - 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2010); Xth Lyon Biennial: *The Spectacle of the Everyday*, Lyon (2009); 7th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2008). She was Artist in Residence in the DAAD Berliner Künstler Program, concluded in 2012.

Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) was formed in 1987, in Florida. CAE is a collective of five tactical media practitioners of various specializations including computer graphics and web design, film/video, photography, text art, book art, and performance. CAE's focus has been on the exploration of the intersections between art, critical theory, technology, and political activism. The group has exhibited and performed at diverse venues internationally, ranging from the street, to the museum, to the internet. Museum exhibitions include the Documenta (2012); Whitney Biennial (2006); *Digital Deviance*, Magasin, Grenoble (2001).

The collective has published six books including *Marching Plague* (2006), *Molecular Invasion* (2002), *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media* (2001), *Flesh Machine: Cyborgs, Designer Babies, Eugenic Consciousness* (1998), *Electronic Civil Disobedience & Other Unpopular Ideas* (1996), and *The Electronic Disturbance* (1994).

Omer Fast (b. 1972. ISR; lives and works in Berlin) is a contemporary artist who plays up the discrepancy between audio and visual sources, testing the line between personal and media accounts of current events and history. Well exhibited world over, his recent solo exhibitions took place at Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2013); Herzliya Museum of Art, Herzliya (2012); Henie Onstad Art Center, Høvikodden (2012); The Power Plant, Toronto (2012); the Kölnische Kunstverein, Cologne (2011); the Wexner Art Center (2010). He has participated in the Venice Biennial (2011) and the Whitney Biennial (2002, 2008).

Agnès Geoffray (b. 1973, FR; lives and works in Paris) is a multi-disciplinary artist, working mainly with photographs and writings, as well as installations and performances. Her works appropriate images and scenes from a collective memory, intending to draw attention to the real meaning of events that are evoked by words and images. She has been a resident at the Villa Medici in Rome (2011) and to Rijksakademie in Amsterdam (2003). Her work was featured in Festival Images, Vevey (2012); Biennale Internationale de la Photographie, Liège (2010); Impakt Video Festival- Panorama, Utrecht (2007); Festival International du Documentaire, Marseille (2006).

Riikka Kuoppala's (b. 1980, FIN; lives and works in Lyon) narrative films play out memories from historical events and personal disasters of the films' characters. The characters use storytelling as a way to survive an identity crisis or a trauma. Kuoppala's recent themes focus gender, family and sickness, that to her, define degrees of inclusion or exclusion in society. The artist is currently concluding a Post-graduate Program at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts in Lyon. Recent solo shows include *La casa di biscotti*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2013); *Sohva, televisio ja videot*, Kluuvi Gallery, Helsinki (2012). Among the latest group exhibitions are *Barricade*, Kuala Lumpur Triennial 7 (2013); *Bodies, Borders, Crossings*, Preus Museum, Horten (2013); *Reality Bites*, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (2012).

Mladen Miljanovic (b. 1981, BOS; lives and works in Banja Luka) is a new media and performance artist. His work is based on his own life experiences of growing up both during and after the war in an ethnically and territorially divided, and isolated country: Bosnia. He uses art as the means of confrontation between a negative past and current social issues, through which forms of collective trauma and identity are redefined. Recent solo exhibitions include *Good Night - State of Body*, MC gallery, New York (2013); *Good Night - State of Body*, A+A gallery, Venice (2012); *Taxi to Berlin*, Antje Wachs gallery, Berlin (2011). Mladen Miljanović will represent Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 55th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennial (2013).

David Ter-Oganyan (b. 1981, RUS; lives and works in Moscow) is a conceptual artist who has followed the actionist-activist tendencies that developed in Russia, as a critical expression in the 2000s towards both the art world and the political system. Primary concerns in his work address issues of social unrest, violence, revolt and resistance. As a key member of the radical Radek Community (1998-2002), Ter-Oganyan has developed a highly original graphic idiom. In his computer drawings and paintings, he fuses sub-cultural gestures and avant-garde references. The artist has had solo exhibitions in Mumok - Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna (2012); Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow (2012); presented such solo shows as *Black Geometry*, Marat Guelman Gallery, Moscow (2009); *Bordeline States*, VP Studio, Moscow (2010). He has also taken part in various group shows internationally including *Ostalgia*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2011); *remarkable Scale* (with Alexandra Galkina), Diehl + Gallery One, Moscow (2009); *Rebellion Mausoleum*, Stella Art Foundation, Moscow (2009).

// ACKNOWLEDGEMENT //

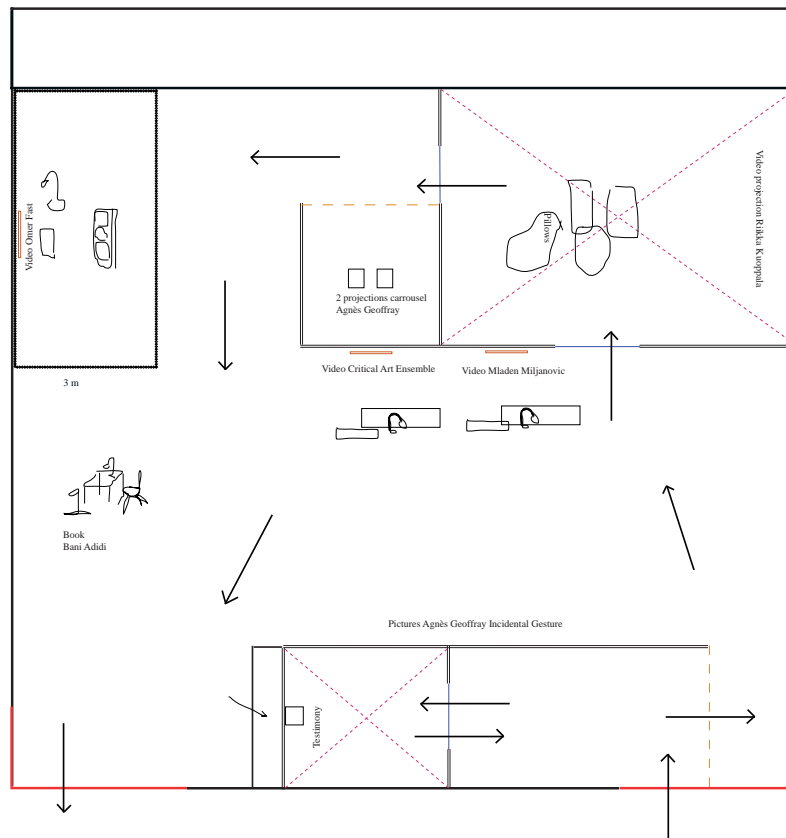
Our sincerest thanks to Yves Aupetitallot for his support throughout the entirety of this project.

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Curatorial Training Program at the Ecole du MAGASIN in Grenoble, France.

PLAN DES ESPACES



Critical Art Ensemble
Marching Plague, 2006
 Video
 17 minutes
 Courtesy of Critical Art Ensemble

Omer Fast
CNN Concatenated, 2002
 Video
 18 minutes
 Courtesy of the artist, gb agency, Paris et Arratia Beer, Berlin

Agnès Geoffray
Incidental Gestures, series de photographies, 2011-2012
 (From left to right) *Le jeu*, *Laura Nelson*, *Libération* (dyptique), *Sans titre*, *Gueule cassée*, *Glanz*, *Sans titre*, *Suspens*
 Courtesy of the artist, with the support of the Centre Photographique d'Ile-de-France and the DRAC Ile-de-France

Mladen Miljanovic
Do You Intend to Lie to Me?, 2011
 Video
 14 minutes
 Support of the production : Academy of Arts Banja Luka in collaboration with M-Quadrat Berlin

Bani Abidi
The Speech Writer, 2011
 Artist's book
 Courtesy of the artist and of Raking Leaves

Agnès Geoffray
Testimony, 2009
 Sound and light installation
 2 minutes
 Courtesy of the artist

Agnès Geoffray
Short stories, 2011
 Double slide projection
 2x80 slides
 Courtesy of the artist

Riikka Kuoppala
Palavan kaupungin alla, *Under a burning city*, 2010
 17 minutes, Video (en boucle)
 Produced by Oy Petomaani Ltd.

David Ter-Oganyan
This not a Bomb (série commencée en 2004, en cours)
 Sculptures
 Courtoisie de l'Artiste

//THE ÉCOLE DU MAGASIN //

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 environment for a rigorous combination of research and practice.

More info: www.ecoledumagasin.com

The participants to Session 22 (2012-2013) and curators of the exhibition are:

Michela Alessandrini (b. 1987, Italy)

Kanika Anand (b.1984, India)

Laurie Chappis Peron (b. 1989, France)

Carmen Stolfi (b. 1985, Italy)

Ekaterina Shcherbakova (b. 1990, Russia)

Dimitra Tsiaouskoglou (b. 1984, Greece)

// CURATORS BIOGRAPHIES //

Michela Alessandrini (b. 1987, Rome) obtained a BA in Contemporary Art History (2009) and a MA in Curating Contemporary Art (2011) at the University La Sapienza in Rome. During her studies, she spent six months at the Sorbonne University in Paris, which resulted in her thesis on the anthropological and social involvement of the French museum MAC/VAL (Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine). In 2008, she initiated several fruitful collaborations with artists, contemporary art institutions and non-profit organizations both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, notably in Hungary (Studio of Young Artists Association, Budapest) and the Czech Republic (FUTURA, non-profit foundation for contemporary art, Prague). Over the last few years, she has gained experience in editing, and has written several art reviews for online magazines. In 2012, she took part in the curatorial residency program, Labor Guest Space (Budapest) where, in collaboration with Hungarian artist Zsuzsi Flohr, she curated *PLartFORM*, an exhibition focused on awareness of individual and collective identities.

Kanika Anand was born in New Delhi, India in 1984. She holds a Bachelor's degree in History from Delhi University and a Master's degree in Art History from the National Museum Institute, New Delhi. She began her career in 2007 as an Associate at Gallery Espace in New Delhi followed by two internships in New York at the Gagosian Gallery and Exit Art in 2008-09. She has worked as Project Manager with leading South Asian scenographer, Rajeev Sethi for the Art Program of the Hyatt Regency in Chennai, India, 2009; was re-appointed as Director- Marketing & Projects at Gallery Espace, 2010-11; and co-partnered the production of *GAGAWAKA: Making Strange*, a part performative and part exhibition project for artist Vivan Sundaram, 2011. Since 2012, she has contributed her writings and reviews to art publications which include Saffron Art and Art Practical.

Laurie Chappis Peron (b. 1989, in Annecy, France) obtained a Master with distinction in art from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts in Dijon in 2011. In her Master's thesis entitled "Balance des blancs" she focused on the importance of the architecture of the gallery space in artistic production. More broadly, she is interested in the conditions of the existence of the artwork beyond visibility. As such, she is particularly interested in conceptual practices and works that exist principally through language or resist the traditional exhibition form, thus offering alternative forms of exhibition.

Ekaterina Shcherbakova (b. 1990, Russia) obtained a BA in "Cultural Studies" and a MA in "Cultural Management" from the National Research University - Higher School of Economics in Moscow. During her studies, she undertook a six-month internship as the assistant to the chief editor of Art Manager magazine. She has worked for several art venues in Moscow, including the 25 Kadr Gallery and the K35 Art Gallery. In 2012, she participated in the production of *Memory Art, 19/ 91* project, at the Artplay Center, Moscow. In June 2012, she curated *Art for Fake* at the K35 Art Gallery, following a twelve-month collaboration as the gallery's manager.

Carmen Stolfi (b. 1985, Italy) graduated with a BA in Humanities from La Sapienza University in Rome in 2008, where she specialized in Fashion and Cultural Studies. She obtained a MA in Communication for Art and Design Industries at the IULM University in Milan in 2011. She has been worked for three years as assistant curator in a number of contemporary art institutions in Italy and the United States, among which the Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome (MACRO), 1/9unosunove Gallery and Nomas Foundation in Rome; the Italian Cultural Institute of New York, and the ISCP (International Studio and Curatorial Program) in New York. As a result of her studies in communication and her interest in relating issues in different creative fields, her research focuses on the notion of transdisciplinarity. Among her last projects, *So near the garden but still miles away*, 1/9unosunove gallery, Rome (2011), explores the notion of displacement of meaning in linguistics and art.

Dimitra Tsiaouskoglou (b. 1984, Greece) is an art historian and emerging curator. During her studies in History and Archaeology School at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, she explored the diversity of artistic production in different civilizations, and, therefore, developed a passion for Art History. After having worked several years in the field of education, she enrolled in the Postgraduate Program in Art History of the same university. Her MA thesis on "Urban Landscape and Human Figure in Contemporary Greek Painting" gave her the opportunity to get acquainted with contemporary artists and have an insight into their practice. More recently, she has been involved in the organization of art exhibitions in both private and public institutions, and participated in curatorial courses and exchanges.

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

The Unborn Museum

PIETRO ROCCASALVA

For his first comprehensive solo show, this Italian artist will gather around forty pieces and installations presented room after room according to a principle of *mise en abîme* to favor the links and the connections which exist between the works.

Painting seems to hold the deepest aspects of the artist's practice for which it is the starting point and the completion, even in his sculptures, installations, digital works, drawings, movies and performances.

Italian artist born in 1970 in Modica, Pietro Roccasalva lives and works in Milano, Italy.



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