

Inventing the Possible
An Ephemeral Video Library
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JEU DE PAUME

INVENTING THE POSSIBLE



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament de Cultura

SANTAMÒNICA

Inventing the Possible

An Ephemeral Video Library

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A production by
the Jeu de Paume

In 2010, the Jeu de Paume presented *Faux Amis* [False Friends], first in the series from *The Ephemeral Video Library*, which was dedicated to the representation of history in contemporary video recording, through the notions of memory, identity, and loss. The selected videos, featuring a combination of documentary and fiction, questioned our understanding of the reality of history through narratives, which rather than aiming to be “veridical”, could actually be “falsifiers”.

This second series has also drawn on the concepts of *false narration* and the *powers of the false*, set out by Deleuze in *Cinema 2, The Time-Image* (1985). It invites us to explore the area of potentiality that lies between history and story, so as to consider the invention of a future that goes beyond the boundaries of utopia. Without this, the brutality of the return to reality could be implacable, just as Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño declared in his *Infrarealist Manifest* in 1976: “We dreamed about utopia and we woke up screaming.” The twenty-five pieces presented in the Video Library thus analyse, with varying degrees of humour or sense of tragedy, our perplexity at being faced with the failure of the utopias which transpired up until the end of the 20th Century.

Documentary or fiction films, animated, experimental or performance films, these pieces, created in the new millennium, have not, however, put an end to the –often intense– dialogue with reality, movements and occurrences from the previous century. This *Ephemeral Video Library* is intended above all to be a provisional archive of videos, produced over the past ten years in very varied contexts and regions: from the desert in Kuwait to the Amazonian

rainforest, from the north of Canada to Bangladesh, Senegal and Indonesia, among others. The selected videos, which screen accounts often enveloped in mystery, portray the present-day, the doubt and uncertainty surrounding it. The temporality of these videos also leaves them open to potentialities: the artists do not only present the themes in the conditional perfect tense (“that would have been”) but also, and especially, in the past future “that will have been”) a tense which can insinuate greater desire. Combined, both tenses break the lineal relation between past, present and future, allowing fiction to wallow in some undefined areas.

Viewing the past from the perspective of potential temporalities, may cause it to lose its “historic truth”, a truth that would appear to be an absolute certainty. We are now able to imagine futures which are possible from the spectrum of the impossible, and invent a tomorrow beyond the utopia. While this project examines the way in which the metaphoric power of imagery contributes to the understanding of the world, it also invites us to ask ourselves if it is still possible to find replacement models or create alternatives. All of these pieces of work share the ambition of creating new energies and building imaginative possibilities simply waiting to materialize. It is interesting to note that the verb *imaginari* in Latin (imaginary), means “creating images in order to be able to invent”.

And although they do not come to any unanimous conclusions, these videos raise questions articulated around themes that frequently intersect with each other, such as the impact of education, the reflection on the notion of “community”, the re-evaluation of the past, and ecological sensitivity.

Wendy Morris invites us to imagine a childhood more closely linked to the real world, which prepares us better for adult life. As if it were a reflection of the location of the Jeu de Paume, situated in the Place de la Concorde opposite the Obelisk of Luxor, Theo Eshetu for his part, addresses the consequences which the recent return of the Obelisk of Axum to its country of origin, could have on contemporary society.

If at first sight it appears that the video by Edgardo Aragón Díaz is intended to arouse sympathy towards zoo animals, it is not long before spectators understand that this work is more about the alienation of many human beings in Europe. The powerful theme of the rewriting of shared dreams, shattered by the tough European reality, also comes up in the works by Mahdi Fleifel, Hayoun Kwon, Daniela Ortiz and Xosé Quiroga. Regarding Yang Fudong's film, he appears to propose creating a community isolated in thought, as a strategy for an alternative life.

The fact that building a caring society, based on a fair social pact, can only come out of the collective will of individuals, is precisely what Pauline Horovitz demonstrates with bitter-sweet humour. Because we should never lower our guard in areas of intolerance, imperialism, and megalomania, ever-present in our societies. In some of the works from the *Video Library*, such as those by Carlos Motta, Peter Friedl, Declinación Magnética, Anxiong Qiu, Atsushi Wada and Allan Sekula, the threat of those shadows which remind us of the past, warn us against atrocities which nobody can be sure will not happen again. Artur Zmijewski faces us with the disturbing beauty of La Havana which cannot seem

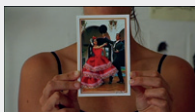
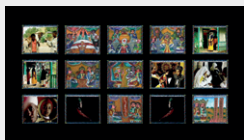
to shake off the signs of indoctrination. Eric Baudelaire introduces us to a cultural idea that is very different from the content of the images, but related to the geopolitical context in which they are received. The censorship they are subjected to incites us to reflect on the right way to act depending on the value assigned to them in one place compared to another. In the same way, Naeem Mohaiemen shows us how forcefully and rapidly values can evolve in a given society, while Martin Le Chevallier presents an impressive social-psycho experience.

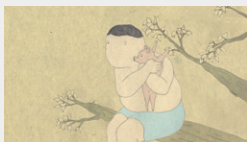
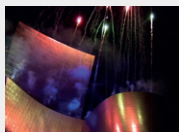
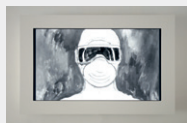
In “Inventing the Possible”, several pieces contain the common theme of power paradoxically won back by nature, while our era is defined more and more like that of Anthropos, that is, the period from which the influence of man on the earth’s system becomes so prominent that nature starts to react in an unpredictable way. Even so, there are terrifying situations which may have reassuring outcomes: human strength unites in the most desperate moments, as Ursula Biemann portrays in the case of Bangladesh; animals are able to survive in the Kuwait desert (Wim Catrysse) and men do not lose hope in spite of the apocalypse which threatens them (Khvay Samnang). The work of Marine Hugonnier proposes that we reflect on the mystery of nature and question the purely scientific relationship that we have with it. While Yto Barrada turns the botanical garden into a place for meditation on the human condition.

The other common theme in these videos is the love towards our closest beings –portrayed in the works by Els Opsomer, Sirah Foighel Brutmann and Eitan Efrat–.

The immense potentiality of contemporary film stems from technology, which now provides us with unlimited access to imagery, words and sound, with its endless combination for providing movement on screen. The spectator can choose whether to become immersed in this or keep a little distance.

Intended as an open installation, videos from the Video Library may be freely watched. And with this varied constellation of ideas, we are likely to find something which makes us contemplate history and current reality in a different way and imagine a shared future. A future which may not even materialize because it is always conditional: it will depend on whether the potentialities transpire or not.





INVENTING
THE POSSIBLE

Edgardo Aragón Díaz

Born in Mexico City in 1985. Lives and works in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Edgardo Aragón Díaz centres much of his work on his own personal experiences and memories from which he reconsiders certain ideas such as masculinity, violence, and domination. With a particular interest in the theme of scenery, he produces symbolic settings which are often framed in certain places and cause a complex reflection on specific periods or areas. In determination to reflect the increase in differences between Northern countries versus those in the South, the artist portrays micro-stories which reveal deeper political and cultural mechanisms.

Hunter, 2013

Video, colour, sound, 9 min 34 s

Courtesy of the artist, Laurel Gitlen Gallery (New York)
and Proyectos Monclova (Mexico City)

© Edgardo Aragón Díaz

Video installation initially presented on two screens, *Hunter* features the surroundings of the zoological park in the centre of Antwerp. A solitary visitor of African origin, gives brief musical performances to wild animals in captivity. He sings traditional hunter songs in his native language and in French. They often take the form of a dialogue: the singer addresses the animals as a source of food, but also as objects of fear, with mockery or veneration. Based on contrast and ambiguity, the video installation portrays the confrontation between wild animals in captivity and the memory of the past symbiosis between man and animal.



Yto Barrada

Born in Paris in 1971. Lives and works in Tangier.

Yto Barrada grew up between Paris, her birthplace, and Tangier. Having studied History and Political Science at the Sorbonne, she continued studying at the International Center of Photography in New York. Her work, which combines photography, cinema, publications, installation and sculpture, associates documentary strategy with a more meditative approach to images and focuses especially on the complex reality surrounding Tangier, an area of transit for illegal immigration on their way to Europe, but also of uncontrolled touristic development, facing serious ecological consequences. Yto Barrada also founded the Tangier Cinémathèque.

www.ytobarrada.com

The Botanist, 2008

Video, colour, sound, 21 min 58 s

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Polaris (Paris)

© Galerie Polaris (Paris)

The Botanist was filmed in the garden of Umberto Pasti, expert on Islamic ceramics, he is a self-taught botanist and lives between Milan and Morocco. His garden, located in a village on the Atlantic coast south of Tangier, is full of hundreds of Moroccan plants, including rare and endangered species. Throughout the course of one day, he received a visit from some English botanical specialists.



Eric Baudelaire

Born in Salt Lake City in 1973. Lives and works in Paris.

Through film, photography, stamping and installation, Eric Baudelaire examines the relationship between image and event, document and narration. His artistic work, based on a research project, features complex settings which focus reality and invite spectators to question the modes of production, construction and consumption portrayed in imagery and accounts.

www.baudelaire.net

[sic], 2009

SD video, colour, sound, 15 min 2 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Eric Baudelaire

Since 1907, under Japanese law it is forbidden to sell or show in public any “obscene documents, drawings, or other objects”.

1907: Article 175 of Japanese law forbids the sale or public showing of any “obscene documents, drawings, or other objects”.

1947: The second paragraph of article 21 of the Japanese Constitution from the post-war, guarantees freedom of speech and the press and stipulates that “there is no censorship”.

1957: The Japanese Supreme Court confirms the ban on the novel by D.H. Lawrence *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The Court maintains the prohibition on obscene images, defining these as “anything which unnecessarily excites or stimulates desire”, resulting in the main jurisprudence constituting an apparent contradiction between article 21 of the Constitution and article 175 of the Penal Code.

1976: *Ai No Corrida (Empire of the Senses)* by Nagisa Oshima is screened at the Cannes Film Festival. Although it was filmed in Kyoto, the film was produced, and the negatives mounted and developed, in Paris. To test the waters prior to the release of the film in Japan, a book was published in Tokyo containing the screenplay and photographs from the making of the film. In July, the publisher was arrested for obscenity. During the trial, Oshima requested that the Supreme Court clarify which philosophical, political, legal, conceptual and visual criteria it is based on, and to define “what it is that unnecessarily excites or stimulates desire”.

1982: The Japanese Supreme Court denied clarifying the concept of obscenity, but nevertheless acquitted Oshima. In the semantic and legal lack of definition that persists to this day, the graphic images imported to Japan were submitted to subjective censorship: the explicit anatomical representation is replaced by the *bokashi*, pixelating, blurring and removal of the male and female genitalia in films and the press.

2008: In a warehouse in Yokohama, employees of Yohan, an international press distributor, go through all imported art and fashion magazines, page by page, deciding where to edit or make cuts.



Ursula Biemann

Born in Zurich in 1955. Lives and works in Zurich.

Video artist and theorist, Ursula Biemann bases her work primarily on research, comprising field-work and video documentation on border regions and areas where inhabitants and resources are in circulation. She researched the social ecologies of oil and water in her video installations *Black Sea Files* (2005), *Egyptian Chemistry* (2012) and *Deep Weather* (2013). Her most recent video, *Forest Law* (2014), on ecologic resources in Amazonia, was commissioned by the Broad Art Museum of Michigan.

www.geobodies.org

Deep Weather, 2013

HDV video, colour, sound, 9 min 4 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Ursula Biemann 2013

Aerial recording of the devastated crust in the Canadian province of Alberta portrays an example of the geological practices employed in order to extract oil. Climate change, exacerbated by projects such as the Canadian tar sands, puts the life of large populations across the world in danger. Meanwhile, melting Himalayan glaciers, rising planetary sea levels and extreme weather occurrences, are imposing changes in lifestyle on the Bangladeshi population. In the film, inhabitants are hand-building protective mud embankments in the delta, where large areas will become submerged in the near future.



Wim Catrysse

Born in Lovaina in 1973. Lives and works in Antwerp.

Since the late 1990's Wim Catrysse has been creating video installations focused on the limits of visual construction, taking architectural structures or the topographical features as the starting point. He captures his research in cinematographic works in which the exposing and balancing of elementary forces play a crucial role. The result is a collection of images that transmit a physical threat, that take us out of our comfort zone, often questioning our most commonly held perceptions.

MSR, 2012

HD video, 16/9, colour, sound, 14 min 58 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Wim Catrysse

In the Kuwaiti desert, amidst a strange setting near to the Main Supply Road (where the majority of materials used to supply military operations pass through), a pack of stray dogs run. In order to survive a fierce sandstorm, they seek shelter behind waste objects and tirelessly dig holes, determined to survive this hostile environment



Declinación Magnética

Aimar Arriola, José Manuel Bueso, Diego del Pozo, Eduardo Galvagni, Sally Gutiérrez, Julia Morandeira Arrizabalaga, Silvia Zayas

Research and production group from Madrid and Bilbao comprising visual artists, theoreticians and curators, Declinación Magnética is based on decolonial and postcolonial studies. It focuses on the combination of methodologies that arises from the use of artistic and research strategies in other areas of the practice and the production of knowledge. Declinación Magnética was created within the context of the research platform “Decolonising Knowledge and Aesthetics”, a project by Matadero Madrid and Goldsmiths College London, which began in the autumn of 2012.
www.declinacionmagnetica.wordpress.com

Margen de error (Libros de texto) 2013 [Margin of Error (Textbooks)]

Video, colour, sound, 17 min 14 s

Courtesy of Declinación Magnética

© Creative Commons

First project by the *Margen de error* group, comprising a series of videos which have also been designed to be presented in the form of installation. It focuses on Spain's colonial past and present through a critical approach to the accounts about the “Discovery and Colonization of America”, just as they still exist in school textbooks. From the perspective of both an analysis of the visual and written treatment of the subject in texts adapted to the current official educational programme, as well as the potential use of these texts in the classroom from a critical stance. *Libros de texto* is the result of a series of group dynamics, between Secondary School (ESO) students and teachers, created from the “deconstruction” of the traditional structure of a history class and its subsequent reconfiguration in the form of a sequence of exercises, such as debates on different concepts that tend to be generalized (or ignored) when taught in class, the memorization of specific texts or acts of physical intervention on the books.



Theo Eshetu

Born in London in 1958. Lives and works between Rome and Berlin.

Theo Eshetu's films and video installations examine concepts of perception, and cultural and sacred identity through complex visual and optical devices (kaleidoscope effects, multi-screen projection, image mosaics, etc). He particularly analyses the relationship between African and European cultures, focusing on anthropology, history of art, scientific research and religion.

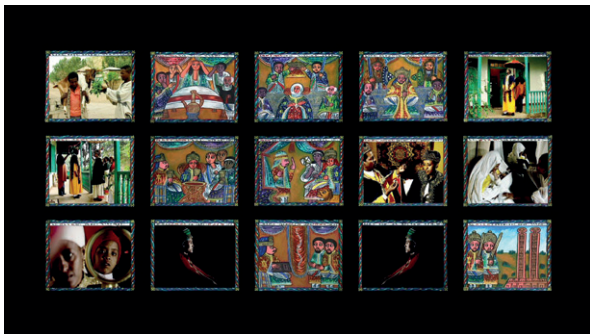
The Return of the Axum Obelisk, 2009

Video, colour, sound, 26 min 46 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Theo Eshetu

Initially presented in installation format on fifteen screens, this video depicts the return to Ethiopia of the "Roman" Obelisk of Axum, over seventy years after Mussolini had it shipped to Italy as spoils of war. From his own film documentation of this extraordinary incident of restitution, of image archives and reproductions of traditional Ethiopian paintings which tell us the original legend of the Queen of Sheba, who reigned over Axum and the surrounding region, Eshetu has created a multi-dimensional piece of work. The compositional complexity of this work reflects the homage the artist wishes to pay to the technical feat involved, resulting in the return of this stunning monument.



Mahdi Fleifel

Born in Dubai in 1979. Lives and works in London.

Mahdi Fleifel, Palestinian film director and artist, grew up on a refugee camp in Lebanon. His stories are inspired in his experience as a person who has been uprooted, in stark contrast to that of close relations who share a same history. He films his daily interactions which reveal sides of exile which are rarely seen. He graduated from the British National Film and Television School in 2009. He directed *Shadi in the Beautiful Well* (2003), *A World Not Ours* (2012) and is currently working on a new project that directly follows on from *Xenos* (2013).

Xenos, 2013

HD video, colour, sound, 12 min

Courtesy of the artist

© Nakba FilmWorks

In 2010, Palestinian Abu Eyad, along with some others, manages to escape from Ain al- Hilweh, the largest refugee camp in Lebanon. They dream of reaching Europe. Helped by smugglers, they flee across Syria and Turkey to Greece, a place of hopes and imaginary paradise. But Greece is suffering a serious economic, political and social crisis, and their dreams are soon broken by a brutal reality which barely allows them to survive. Having absolutely no access to a better life, the young refugees waste their days away in a parallel universe. They take drugs to escape the boredom and emptiness. They earn money from street prostitution, in which both men and women partake.



Sirah Foighel Brutmann i Eitan Efrat

Born in Tel Aviv in 1983. Live and work in Brussels.

Sirah Foighel Brutmann and Eitan Efrat and have been collaborating for several years on audiovisual works in which private life and geopolitical context blend together. Their work therefore highlights the performative dimension of video.

Printed Matter, 2011

Film, 16mm transferred to HD video, 4/3, colour, stereo sound, 29 min

Courtesy of the artists

© Sirah Foighel Brutmann and Eitan Efrat

Printed Matter is based on material taken by André Brutmann, who was a freelance press photographer covering Middle East news for local and international newspapers for two decades, up until his death in 2002. His vast collection, which provides a visual chronicle of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, consists of images of civil dissent, armed violence, funeral grief and political speeches, both in Israel, and the occupied territories. After becoming a father in 1983, this professional media worker also began to regularly photograph his family. *Printed Matter* shows a selection of contact sheets and sets of negatives from his archive, in three ten-minute shots. The lucky witness to these stories, Hanne Foighel, (Brutmann's partner and freelance journalist), looks back over past times as she lines up these images and reminisces on the memories.



Peter Friedl

Born in Oberneukirchen (Austria) in 1960.

Lives and works between Berlin and New York.

The artistic practice of Peter Friedl, explores the construction of history and concepts, while presenting new models of narration.

Bilbao Song, 2010

Video, colour, sound, 5 min 53 s

Courtesy of the artist and Guido Costa Projects (Turin)

© Peter Friedl

In an empty theatre, the spectator is confronted by the scene of a series of *tableaux vivants* (living pictures), inspired in the historically themed paintings, from *Henry IV playing with his children* (1817) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, to pictures from the Basque School painted between 1915 and the end of the Spanish civil war. Considering the relationships which are formed between the lead roles in the different scenes, it would appear that Friedl intended to present an alternative to the historicist story, by inviting us to interpret these historic pictures in a different way. Emblematic characters related to the Basque culture spring up in the middle of these scenes, such as, Julen Madariaga (lawyer, co-founder of ETA and later of the pacifist social movement Elkarri), and Pirritx and Porrotx, the clown duo who defend the Basque country. The video is accompanied by a live interpretation of the song “Bilbao song”, taken from *Happy End* by Bertolt Brecht, Elisabeth Hauptmann and Kurt Weill.



Yang Fudong

Born in Peking in 1971. Lives and works in Shanghai.

The films and photographic work of Yang Fudong often inspired in traditional Chinese painting, examine tensions between the notions of urban and rural, history and the present, materialism and intellectualism. Their timeless and dreamlike quality, long sequences, standing still in time, as well as multiple relationships and storylines reflect the mysteries of idealism and ideology faced by a new generation. At the same time, the works address the ideals and anxieties of young people who are struggling to find their place in the fast-paced changes of present-day China.

Seven Intellectuals in Bamboo Forest, Part I, 2003

Film, 35mm transferred to DVD, black-and-white, sound, 29 min
Courtesy of the artist and the Marian Goodman Gallery (Paris / New York)

© Yang Fudong

This black-and-white, five-part film is inspired in the legendary “Seven Savages”, a group of third-century Chinese intellectuals who distanced themselves from the government to take shelter in the countryside to an existence based on Daoist-inspired reflection and heavy drinking. Their famous rebellion has been represented in traditional Asian art for centuries. In Yang Fudong’s film, youngsters with fashionable jackets and briefcases retreat to the mountains to admire the beauty of nature. The artist suggests that these well educated and economically independent youngsters are still in search of profundity and poignancy. The work which uses black film aesthetics, depicts the new experience of modernity in China while also illustrating universal themes of isolation and alienation.



Pauline Horovitz

Born in Bordeaux in 1978. Lives and works in Paris.

Bordering documentary, fiction, and experimental cinema, Pauline Horovitz's films and sound pieces are inspired in the artist's family, in extravagant characters who have come together, and in her own personality. The individuals she depicts somehow do not fit into this world, and inadvertently reveal the incongruity, or even awkwardness, of social norms and prejudice. The artist uses this material to produce works of content which continually swing between burlesque, fantasy, gravity and pain.

Des châteaux en Espagne, 2013

[Castles in Spain]

HD video, colour, sound, 25 min 50 s

Courtesy of the artist and QUARK Productions (Paris)

© Pauline Horovitz

Burlesque fantasy which adopts elements of spaghetti western, *Des châteaux en Espagne* portrays a Spain which had been imagined and expected by the narrator's family, at a time when survival depended on German and Polish Jews ensuring their suitcases were always packed in advance. During her stay in Madrid, the narrator discovers, in false naivety, an idealized image of Spain. Self-irony, cold humour, and feigned neutrality, characterize the voice-over of the narrator who combines disperse fragments of the present which she has difficulty adapting to, with a painful past.



Marine Hugonnier

Born in Paris in 1969. Lives and works in London.

In her films, photographs and works on paper, Marine Hugonnier explores, deconstructs and perverts modes of representation, by inventing research methods inspired in anthropology and using formal games such as the absence of images, their overlay or the reinterpretation of well-known shapes.

www.marinehugonnier.com

Apicula Enigma, 2013

33 mm film transferred to Bly-ray, colour, sound, 25 min 56 s

Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça (São Paulo) and Galería Nogueras Blanchard (Madrid)

© Marine Hugonnier

This film is an animal documentary shot in the Carinthia region (Austria), known for its beekeeping tradition. It shows the beehive and the colony, the collecting of pollen and honey, and the bees swarming out of the beehive to the nearest tree and then swarm out again to disappear into the forest. Marine Hugonnier aims to closely follow the factual reality of the shooting, filming the crew and the image-making process, as well as the space in between the crew and the bees. In this work, the artist questions the conventions of animal documentaries aiming to keep a distance to allow the animal world to maintain its mystery, as suggested in the name of the film *Apicula Enigma*, literally, “the bee's riddle”.



Hayoun Kwon

Born in Seoul in 1981. Lives and works in Paris.

Hayoun Kwon's films are based on diverse documentary materials, and revolve around themes related to individual and collective memory. Her native country, South Korea, is very much present in her work. Her imagery refer to both the transparency and the opacity of language and question the material and immaterial structure of history.

Manque de preuves, 2011

[Lack of Evidence]

Animated documentary film, HD, colour, sound (Dolby Surround prologic1), 9 min 27 s

Production: Le Fresnoy

Courtesy of Dohyang Lee Gallery (Paris)

© Hayoun Kwon

In Nigeria, being born a twin can be a blessing or a curse. Oscar and his brother were supposed to be sacrificed during a ritual ceremony, but Oscar managed to escape. Exiled in France, he requested asylum, but was rejected due to lack of evidence. In the reconstruction using image synthesis, Hayoun Kwon addresses the restoration of the memory and the fictional dimension of testimony. *Manque de preuves* is half way between a story and real life. The gap between reality and the imaginary is imperceptible. The film observes the paradoxes of the refugee story and reveals the ambiguity of reality when faced with law.



Martin Le Chevallier

Born in Fontenay-aux-Roses in 1968. Lives and works between Rennes and Paris.

Martin Le Chevallier's projects portray the absurdity of certain practices and contemporary ideas in an ironic way. Among others, he has devised a video surveillance game, created a telephone server dedicated to our consumerist pathologies, had himself audited by a consultancy firm, and been to Brussels in a procession in order to present a miraculously safe-guarded European flag. In counterpoint, he has also worked on more cinematographic projects. Thus *L'An 2008* (2010), both film and installation, offers a picaresque account of globalization, while *Le Jardin d'Attila* (2012) takes us on a journey through other possible worlds. Le Chevallier is also the artistic co-director of *Libération*.

www.martinlechevallier.net

Le Jardin d'Attila, 2012

[Attila's Garden]

Video, colour, stereo sound, 32 min 5 s

This work was supported by the Centre national des arts plastiques – Dispositif Image / Mouvement

© Aurora films, 2012

Le Jardin d'Attila presents the intellectual peregrinations of a walker. He converses with a wide variety of people, and discusses the future of a world deprived of its foundations with them, and rethinks the history of utopias. Could we abolish the family, commerce or the state? At a crossroad between anthropology, Diderot's Jacques the Fatalist, Flaubert's Saint-Antoine, Cervante's Don Quixote and the wildest utopias, *Le Jardin d'Attila* offers a subjective exploration into the world of imaginary possibilities.



Naeem Mohaiemen

Born in London in 1969. Lives and works between Dhaka and New York.

Writer and artist, Mohaiemen uses photography, film and essays to investigate rupture histories, including that of the global left and failed utopias www.shobak.org

Rankin Street, 1953 - 2013

Video, colour, sound, 7 min 43 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Naeem Mohaiemen

When Naeem Mohaiemen discovers a box of photographs that his father took years before he was born, he begins to ask himself about his family archives, the failure of memory and the role of images as a way of remembering.



Wendy Morris

Born in Walvis Bay (Namibia) in 1960. Lives and works in Belgium.

In her work, primarily comprising carbon animated films, Wendy Morris investigates different forms of representing the African continent in Europe. This multi-disciplinary South African artist (animation, short films and sound works) studied Fine Arts and History of Art in her home country, before obtaining a PhD in Art at the University of Leuven with a set of three short films *The Salvation Project*.

www.wendymorris.blogspot.fr

Orlando's Book, 2013

Animated film, black-and-white, sound, 3 min 52 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Wendy Morris, 2014

The starting point of the film is the book of landscapes which Orlando received, a boy brought up in South African missionaries and also one of Wendy Morris's ancestors. In *Orlando's Book*, the artist makes a reflection on the remembering places in an attempt to reconcile memories of places we know from books but have never visited, with memories of places we have experienced but never seen illustrated in books.



Carlos Motta

Born in Bogotá (Colombia) in 1978. Lives and works in New York.

Carlos Motta is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work uses elements of political history in an attempt to create counter narratives that include histories, communities and lost identities.

www.carlosmotta.com

Nefandus, 2013

HD video, 16/9 colour, sound, 13 min 6 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Carlos Motta, 2014

Carlos Motta's *Nefandus Trilogy* are three recent short films by on pre-Hispanic and colonial sexuality. In *Nefandus*, a man travels by canoe down the Don Diego river in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the Colombian Caribbean. The landscape is one of "wild" beauty. The man tells stories about *pecados nefandos* (unspeakable or abominable sins), acts of sodomy that took place during the conquest. It has been widely documented that Spanish conquistadors used sex as a weapon of domination, but what is known about homoerotic pre-Hispanic traditions? How did Christian morality, taught by the Catholic missions and propagated through war during the conquest, transform the natives' relationship with sex? *Nefandus* looks to the landscape, its movement and its sounds, for clues of stories that remain untold or which have been largely ignored or stigmatized in historical accounts.



Els Opsomer

Born in Gant in 1968. Lives and works between Brussels and Rufisque (Senegal).

Based on an archive of urban imagery built up over years, Els Opsomer's work focuses on the consequences of globalization on individual integrity and addresses the failed utopias of modern life.

Building Stories #001 [That Distant Piece of Mine], 2014

16 mm film transferred to HD video, colour, sound, 42 min 27 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Els Opsomer

Building Stories #001 [That Distant Piece of Mine] presents a documentary in the form of a poetic stroll through Senegal, revealing the vagrant tendencies of its inhabitants in an urban setting apparently as affected by progress as by the absence of it, where buildings have been lodged in the landscape like UFO's, in contrast to abandoned infrastructure. The tension surrounding the film stems from the interaction between the familiar and the strange, between what is constructed and what is being demolished, between the stories invented by the viewer and the stories told by these scenes.



Daniela Ortiz i Xosé Quiroga

Born in Cuzco (Peru) in 1985. Lives and works in Barcelona.

Born in London in Ourense (Spain) in 1979. Lives and works in Barcelona.

The work of Daniela Ortiz and Xosé Quiroga aims to create areas of tension to explore concepts of race, class, nationality and gender in order to analyse social behaviour. Several of their projects and research works have for some years now revolved around migratory issues and measures taken by States and host countries to cope with this.

Daniela Ortiz and Xosé Quiroga are editors on the independent news website antigonia.com, which aims to highlight certain events, by contrasting news stories obtained from mass media with those from independent reporters.

www.daniela-ortiz.com / www.antigonia.com

Homenaje a los caídos, 2012 [Tribute to the Fallen]

Video, colour, sound, 17 min 11 s

Courtesy of the artists

© Daniela Ortiz i Xosé Quiroga

Bearing a banner showing a photo of Congolese immigrant Samba Martine, and on the other side, the inscription “following 38 days at the immigrant detention centre in Aluche, she died in hospital on 12 October”, Daniela Ortiz organized a procession through Madrid during the celebration of Spain’s National Day on 12 October 2012. It went from the Plaza de Colón to the 12th October Hospital, where Samba Martine died in 2011, stopping at symbolic places such as in front of the former residence of Congolese politician Moïse Tshombe and in front of the Aluche detention centre.



Anxiong Qiu

Born in Chengdu (China) in 1972. Lives and works in Shanghai.

Anxiong Qiu's work, comprising paintings, video installations and animated films often based on traditional Chinese ink-and-wash style drawing with a dreamlike approach to the passing of time and inevitability of change. The artist reflects on the interaction between old and modern culture, the degradation of the environment, mass urbanization and fractured society.

www.qiuanxiong.net

Flying South, 2006

Animated film, black-and-white, sound, 8 min 59 s

Courtesy of the artist

© Anxiong Qiu

Flying South presents a succession of images of fields which have been devastated by intensive farming, and slowly vanishing landscape, mutant, disease-ridden animals, mass burials, burned books or ones that fly out of libraries... A whole series of chaotic sights that portray a disturbed social order, whose original balance remains in the film's title, which poetically refers to the migration of birds with the changing seasons. Anxiong Qiu's black account offers us a subtle indication of the darkest reality of contemporary China.



Khvay Samnang

Born in Svay Rieng (Cambodia) in 1982. Lives and works in Phnom Penh.

Khvay Samnang examines the concepts of mediation, change, and continuity. He offers new interpretations of history, deep-rooted cultural practices, and current social disputes. He is founding member of the Stiev Selapak artists collective, of spaces Sa Sa Art Projects (2010), and SA SA BASSAC (2007).

Untitled, 2011

Video, colour, sound, 4 min 22 s loop

Courtesy of the artist and SA SA BASSAC (Phnom Penh)

© Khvay Samnang

This video, which can also be presented in installation format, is about the privatization of the public lakes of Phnom Penh by the Cambodian authorities, who came to an illegal agreement with developers to forcefully evict thousands of residents from the waterside. Four thousand families ended up being evicted from the vicinity of Lake Boeung Kak, in the city centre. In the nine performances which took place throughout 2010, while the security guards were on their lunch break, the artist would enter the waters of these lakes at different stages of their development, and pour a bucket of sand onto his head. This simple, repetitive act represented the dredging and appropriation of these lakes.



Allan Sekula

Born in Erie (United States) in 1951 – died in Los Angeles in 2013.

Shortly after obtaining his Master in Fine Arts from the University of San Diego in 1974, Allan Sekula began to publish articles on *Artforum* to investigate the different social uses of photography. These articles, compiled in 1984 in *Photography against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973–1983*, significantly changed the way in which the documentary function of this was conceptualized.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of the seventies, his work on photographic sequences, written texts, slide shows and sound recordings have evolved in a similar way to cinema.

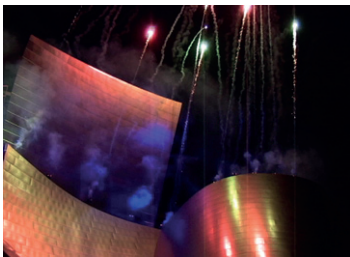
Gala, 2005

Digital video transferred to DVD, colour, sound, 26 min

Courtesy of the Estate of Allan Sekula

© Estate of Allan Sekula

The monumental Walt Disney Hall was opened in Los Angeles in October 2003. During the opening ceremony of this building, a design by architect Frank Gehry, the theatricality of the place is verging on the ostentatious. Pink, mauve and yellow light up the sky like a fairytale ballet. Allan Sekula's camera scrutinizes this world famous act and sketches the portrait of a glitzy society dressed up in glamorous exhibition on the monumental steps of the main entrance. Without being demonstrative, but capturing significant details, the film portrays a kaleidoscopic critique of a culture of the upper class and questions the fine line between public and private space.



Atsushi Wada

Born in Kobe (Japan) in 1980. Lives and works in Kobe.

Atsushi Wada's work is often presented in the form of allegories and stories which usually offer the spectator quite mysterious evocations. In the artist's animated films, the traditional Japanese concept of hand, which denotes "the intervals between things", appears recurrently.
www.kankaku.jp

In a Pig's Eye, 2010

Animated HDCAM film, colour, stereo sound, 10 min 9 s

Courtesy of CaRTe bLaNChe

© Atsushi Wada / Tokyo University of the Arts

A giant pig is resting in a non-descript garden and is blocking the door to the house. Inside is a large family made up of the father, mother, grandfather, six children and a dog. The monotonous daily chores which characterize the inside of the house contrast with the more fun games outside of it, but ultimately the film captures the boredom and absurdity of daily life. The sepia tone of the work recalls traditional Japanese painting on rolls of paper.



Artur Żmijewski

Born in Warsaw in 1966. Lives and works in Warsaw.

In his photography, films and videos, Artur Żmijewski examines social codes through the observation of real-life unusual situations, or ones which he himself invents. He views his work as an outbreak of events, the scripts of which are inspired in strategies of political action and are intended to provoke a reaction from the participants, which he then documents in his work. His work often examines the traumas caused by historic or socio-political events.

Habana Libre, 2010 [Free Havana]

Video, colour, sound, 24 min 44 s

Courtesy of the artist, of the Foksal Gallery Foundation (Varsovia) and the Galerie Peter Kilchmann (Zurich)

© Artur Żmijewski

Habana Libre was filmed in Cuba. Artur Żmijewski strolls through the streets of La Havana and films people who are busy collecting waste, sewing clothes or selling food. The images do not contain commentary. The film portrays a wide account of a city and its inhabitants.



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