

PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY

FEBRUARY 19 to MAY 1, 2011

MODELS FOR TAKING PART

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ANETTA MONA CHIŞA & LUCIA TKÁČOVÁ
ARTUR ŽMIJEWSKI, TOBIAS ZIELONY

CURATOR: JUAN A. GAITÁN

February 19 to May 1, 2011

Models for Taking Part brings together media works by international artists Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová, Tobias Zielony, and Artur Żmijewski, with a special film screening by Renzo Martens. The three works in the exhibition are critical interpretations of the public sphere as an idea and ideal that intersects uneasily with factional and even personal interests, and is thus constantly thrown into fragments.

Artur Żmijewski's *Democracies* (2009) is a multi-screen installation

comprised of short vignettes of protests, public processions and historical re-enactments. Each vignette documents a different manifestation of such collective mobilizations, comprised mostly of recent protests in support of democratic rights or some form of self-affirmation, occurring in Western Europe and countries directly affected by its proximity. Tobias Zielony's *Vele di Scampia* (2010) is a video and photography-based documentary that focuses on Franco di Salvo's eponymously



Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová

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named modernist housing project in Naples, Italy—a product of Italian rationalism that was taken over by the mafia and thus “privatized,” albeit in a very public way. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (2010) is a video by Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová in which a group of “blonde” girls are asked to read sentences from Darwin, one at a time, and pass them on in secret. The girl sitting at the end of the chain must utter the secret out loud. The initially complex sentences become simplified and transformed through a string of interpretations and re-interpretations.

All three works offer models of participation that are unsustainable in terms of the ideal marriage between democracy and the public sphere: in *Democracies* (image detail, left) the viewer is confronted with an emotionless gaze that seems relentlessly disenchanted with the effectiveness of public actions; in *Vele di Scampia* one is brought into a world that seems thoroughly uninterested in politics, open only to itself; and on a humorous note, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*

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appropriates a discourse of collectivity that at the same time exercises a degree of violence on collective knowledge.

One might see Renzo Martens' *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty* (image below) as the "coda" of this exhibition. This documentary/film shows a man, reminiscent of a Werner Herzog character, charging through the Upper Congo, bent on displaying a neon sign that reads "Enjoy Poverty." In "bad

faith" (in Jean-Paul Sartre's terms) – if not bad taste – this enterprise nevertheless manages to reveal a reality that, though widely discussed, is generally suppressed from media representation or, worse, industriously controlled. The film is also a statement about the investment that the idea of participation (one hesitates to use the word "commitment") has on individuals and their motivations.

-Juan A. Gaitán



Renzo Martens

Anetta Mona Chișa, born in Romania, and **Lucia Tkáčová**, born in Slovakia, have been working together since 2000 and currently live in Prague. Recent exhibitions include *Figura cuncta vedentis* at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; *How to Make a Revolution at MLAC*, Rome; and *The Making of Art* at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt. They will represent Romania in the next Venice Biennale.

Berlin-based **Tobias Zielony** produces photographs and moving pictures that often portray groups of teenagers in suburban settings and social places at the fringes of urban environments. Recent exhibitions have been at Kunstverein Hamburg, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, Sprengel Museum, Hannover, with an upcoming show at Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany. His new book, *Story/No Story*, published by Hatje Cantz is available in the Presentation House Gallery bookstore.

Born in Warsaw, Poland where he lives, **Artur Żmijewski** works almost exclusively with the media

of photography and film. From an almost anthropological viewpoint he investigates social norms, morality and representations of power, and the relation of art to politics. His work has been in numerous international solo and group exhibitions and publications, and he represented Poland at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005. He is a member of the Polish political movement “Krytyka Polityczna” and the art director of the magazine of the same name. He has been appointed curator of the 7th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2012.

Dutch artist **Renzo Martens** is working on a series of films that try to mediate their own complicity with dominant visual regimes. His works have recently been shown at Tate Modern, London, Kunsthaus Graz, La Vireina, Barcelona, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the 6th Berlin Biennale. *Episode I* of this series was shot in a refugee camp in Chechnya in 2002. A screening of *Episode III*, followed by a discussion, will take place in early April.

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Tobias Zielony

Juan A. Gaitán is Curator at Witte de With, Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. He has produced numerous exhibitions of contemporary art and has published and lectured widely.

**Anetta Mona Chişa
& Lucia Tkáčová**

*The Descent of Man, and Selection
in Relation to Sex*, 2010
Video, sound, 32 min.
Courtesy the artists and Christine
König Galerie, Vienna

Tobias Zielony

Vele di Scampia, 2010
Video animation, 8:57
Courtesy the artist and Koch Oberhu-
ber Wolff, Berlin

Tobias Zielony

Mini-Bike, 2010
C-print
Courtesy the artist and Koch
Oberhuber Wolff, Berlin

Tobias Zielony

The Group, 2010
C-print
Courtesy the artist and Koch
Oberhuber Wolff, Berlin

Tobias Zielony

Vela Rossa, 2010
C-print
Courtesy the artist and Koch
Oberhuber Wolff, Berlin

Tobias Zielony

Structure, 2010
C-print
Courtesy the artist and Koch
Oberhuber Wolff, Berlin

Artur Żmijewski

Democracies, 2009
Video, 8 screens, sound
Courtesy the artist, Galerie Peter
Kilchmann, Zurich and Foksal Gallery
Foundation, Warsaw

EXHIBITION RECEPTION

Saturday, April 2

Introduction with curator, Juan A. Gaitán 7:30 pm

Reception to follow, 8 pm

FILM SCREENING

Monday, April 4, at 7 pm

Renzo Martens' *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty*

A 90-minute film followed by a public discussion and responses from Ken Lum (visual artist), Isabelle Pauwels (media artist), Nettie Wild (documentary filmmaker) and moderated by Juan A. Gaitán

Location details: The Djavad Mowafaghian Cinema
Third floor, SFU Woodward's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
149 West Hastings Street, Vancouver
Supported by SFU Woodward's

PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY

333 Chesterfield Avenue
North Vancouver, BC Canada V7M 3G9
www.presentationhousegallery.org
Hours: Wednesday to Sunday 12 to 5pm

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