

## ***Models for Taking Part***

February 19 to May 1, 2011

**Curator: Juan A. Gaitán**

**Exhibition Introduction with curator: Saturday, April 2, 7:30 pm**

**Reception: Saturday, April 2, 8 pm**

*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 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* (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 reinterpretations.

All three works offer models of participation that are unsustainable in terms of the ideal marriage between democracy and the public sphere: in *Democracies* 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*, 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* 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

Anetta Mona Chişa, 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.

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.

Media contact: Diane Evans, [devans@presentationhousegallery.org](mailto:devans@presentationhousegallery.org)  
Gallery hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 12 to 5pm. Close Monday & Tuesday

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, University of Toronto:

## **Models for Taking Part**

9 September - 11 December 2011

Anetta Mona Chişa and Lucia Tkáčová, Bouchra Khalili, Renzo Martens, Tobias Zielony, and Artur Żmijewski

Curated by Juan A. Gaitán

### **Art, Space, Democracy - Curator's Tour and Round-Table Discussion**

Wednesday 12 October 2011, 6:00 - 8:30 pm

6:00 pm Tour: Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

Followed by Round-table Discussion in the Music Room, 2nd Floor, Hart House

**Round-table participants:** Juan A. Gaitán with Elle Flanders, Dana Granofsky, and Meghan Sutherland



IMAGE CREDIT: Renzo Martens, *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty*, 2009, film, 90 min. Courtesy the artist.

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

Artur Żmijewski's *Democracies* (2009) is a multiscreen installation comprised of short vignettes of protests, public processions, and historical re-enactments. Each vignette documents a different manifestation of such collective mobilizations, which are largely comprised 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.

Bouchra Khalili's video works typically set up complex relationships between documentary and ghostly images, different languages, "in" and "off" sounds, and real or potential stories. *Straight Stories - Part 2: ANYA* (2008) explores the Bosphorus area of Istanbul, which separates two continents (Europe and Asia), if at an imaginary level. Today the area is a labyrinth where migrants wait before going further west or end up settling there. The work takes us to meet people who confide their hopes to go or stay, to return home or continue their travels.

Tobias Zielony's *Vele di Scampia* (2010) is a video and photography-based documentary that focuses on Franco di Salvo's eponymously 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 Chisa & Lucia Tkáčová wherein 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 these works offer models of participation that are unsustainable in terms of the ideal marriage between democracy and the public sphere: in *Democracies*, the viewer is confronted with an emotion-less 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; in *Straight Stories – Part 2: ANYA*, one encounters the territories of displacement, wanderings, and forced nomadic existences; and, on a humorous note, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* 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* 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" (to use Jean-Paul Sartre's term)—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.

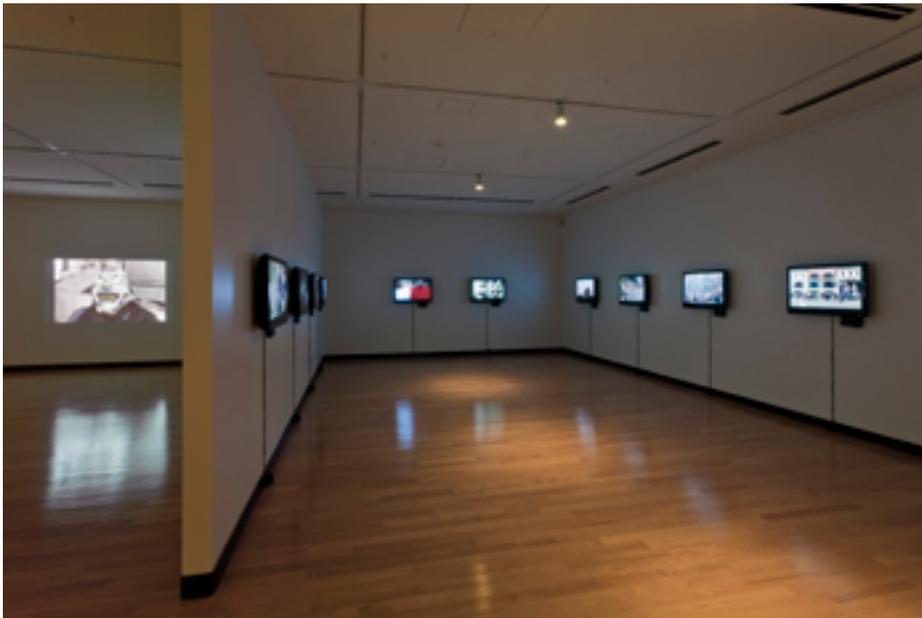


IMAGE CREDIT: *Models for Taking Part* at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, University of Toronto. Photographed by Toni Hafkenscheid, 2011.

**Anetta Mona Chișă**, 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 vbedentis*, at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; *How to Make a Revolution* at MLAC, Rome; and *The Making of Art* at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt. They represented Romania at the 2011 Venice Biennale.

**Bouchra Khalili** is a French-Moroccan artist, born in Casablanca in 1975. Travelling between France and Morocco, she lives and works in Paris. Khalili studied cinema at the Sorbonne Nouvelle and earned a diploma from l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy. Her work has been included in exhibitions internationally, and is included in the upcoming shows *Mapping Subjectivity, Part II: Experimentation in Arab Cinema. 1960-Now*, MOMA, New York; and *Locus Agonistes: Practices and Logics of the Civic*, Argos Centre for Art and Media, Brussels, curated by Okwui Enwezor—both presented in the fall of 2011.

Dutch artist **Renzo Martens** is working on a series of films that have the effect of mediating their

own complicity with dominant visual regimes. Martens' work has recently been shown at Tate Modern (London); Kunsthaus Graz, La Virreina (Barcelona); Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam); and the 6th Berlin Biennale. The series' Episode I was shot in a refugee camp in Chechnya, in 2002.

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 taken place at Kunstverein Hamburg, Fotomuseum Winterthur (Switzerland); Sprengel Museum (Hannover); and an upcoming show at Museum Folkwang (Essen, Germany). His new book, *Story/No Story*, published by Hatje Cantz, can be perused at the gallery desk.

Born and based in Warsaw, Poland, **Artur Żmijewski** works almost exclusively in photography and film. From a nearly anthropological viewpoint, Żmijewski investigates social norms, morality, and representations of power, and the relation of art to politics. His work has been exhibited in numerous international solo and group exhibitions and publications, and he represented Poland at the 2005 Venice Biennale. He is a member of the Polish political movement "Krytyka Polityczna," and the art director of the magazine of the same name. Żmijewski has been appointed curator of the 7th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2012.

**Juan A. Gaitán** is a curator currently working at Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Justina M. Barnicke  
Gallery

PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY

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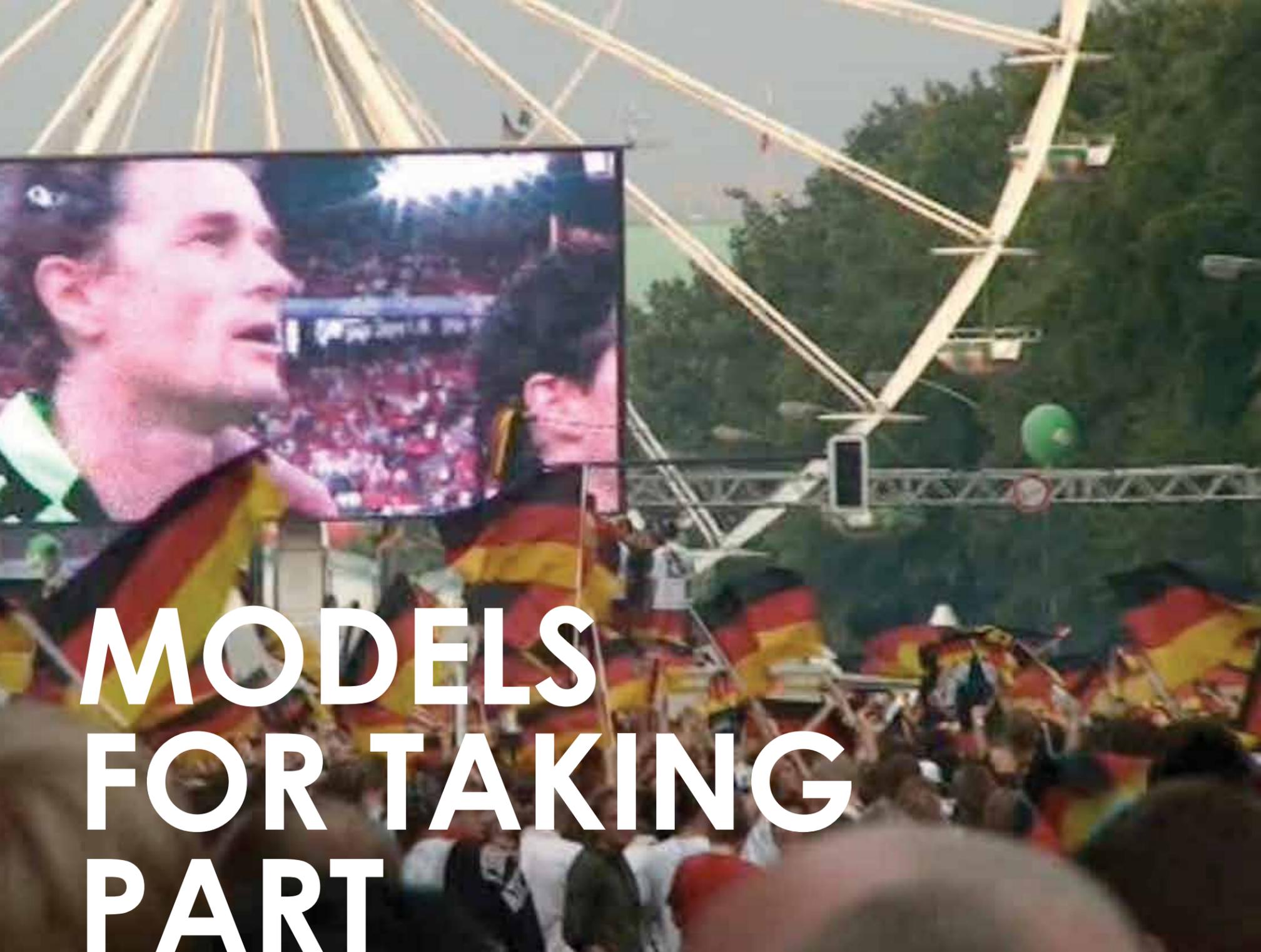
Hal Jackman  
Foundation



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
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Supported by the Province of British Columbia

HartHouse





# MODELS FOR TAKING PART

MARK BOULOS

ANETTA MONA CHIŞA & LUCIA TKÁČOVÁ

BOUCHRA KHALILI

RENZO MARTENS

TOBIAS ZIELONY

ARTUR ŻMIJEWSKI

COLLEGE ART GALLERIES  
OCTOBER 5 to DECEMBER 22, 2012

PUBLIC RECEPTION  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12 at 8pm

CURATED BY JUAN A. GAITÁN  
ORGANIZED BY PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY

Financial support from the British Columbia Arts Council Touring Initiatives Program

Image: Artur Żmijewski, *Democracies*, 2009, video (video still). Courtesy the artist, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw.



KENDERDINE ART GALLERY  
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