

Simon Senn
2008-2011

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Hashtag liberty (2011)

Video installation (8 min.), HDV

On April 4, 2011, 83 people from Sekalla Egypt received the following invitation through social networking websites:

“Hello. You are invited to come share with us your opinion about a video related to the revolution that you saw on the Internet and influenced you. You are expected Wednesday, April 6 at 2pm at the Dream Net Cafe. At first everyone will present his video and discuss it with those present. This meeting will be filmed. Thereafter, we will go out on the outskirts of the city and everyone will, in front of the camera, give his opinion in relation to the video he chose. You’ll be completely free to give your personal opinion.”

Wednesday, April 6 at 2pm Nobi was the only person who showed up at the Dream Net Cafe. He was interested about the project and proposed to look for participants in the street by himself for the next day.

Thursday, April 7, Krolus, Nobi, Ousam and Ousama arrived with a video in their mind they wanted to talk about.





She was not sure that on January 25
the revolution would go on.



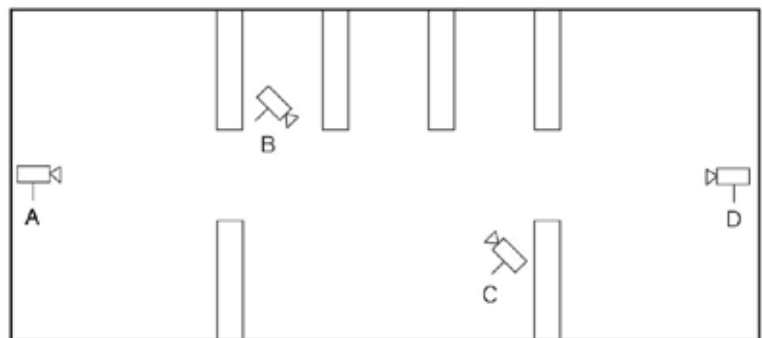
L'hôtel des sapins (2008)

High definition interactive video
(13 min.)

HDV camcorder, MiniDV camcorder, DV camcorder, HI8 camcorder, digital camera, mobilephone camera, laptop webcam

Three women and three men are naked and masked. They each have a number assigned. The action takes place in an abandoned building. Each protagonist holds a camera in his hands. Everyone of them must film the other persons without being seen by the other moving cameras. Four extra static cameras are filming the whole scene. Four extra static cameras are filming the whole scene.

The ten resulting videos are precisely synchronised. The installation of the work is an interactive video in which the spectator can navigate between the different viewpoints with a remote control.



Given space in which the action takes place.





Meadowlands Zone 1 (2010)
Video installation (12 min.), HDV

Meadowlands Zone 1 is a video installation constituted by one video projection and two monitors taking place in a dark space, divided into two rooms. All videos are connected to each other to create one narrative surrounding. The title is the name of the neighbourhood in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa, where the videos have been shot. In the first room a projection is placed on one wall. It is the heart of the installation, the center point where the narration takes place. A black guy is standing within a poor environment, surrounded by trash and dirt, in the back of him barracks are visible. Pointing at his surrounding he talks loud and strong-willed into the camera in Zulu, accompanied by English subtitle. Charged with emotions he complains about the cor-

ruption and distress in his country. Very convincingly and impressively he expresses his anger about the unfairness in South Africa, which is still omnipresent in the townships. Being furious about no changes at all he is demonstrating and communicating his feelings to the world. After 25 seconds the video starts again from the beginning.





At the end of the room an open alleyway leads into a second room in which two monitors are installed next to each other on one wall. Both have the same function by informing about the development of the video being shown in the first room. The monitor on the left hand side shows a video, in which a guy, who is sitting on the back of a Pick-up, is asking different men on the street if they are interested in participating in a casting. Everyone taking part has got 20 seconds time to tell the world, what concerns him most. The person with the strongest, most intense and sensational performance will win the competition. The winner will be filmed at a special place by presenting his message and will receive some money. After six men have joined the guy on the back of the Pick-up, the car drives to a location, where the casting takes place. At the end of the video the guy tells the participants who the winner is.

The video from the monitor on the right side shows the footage of the casting. Each of the six men is filmed in front of a neutral house wall, within 20 seconds time each single person is presenting himself in front of the camera with his most important message. Not until entering the second room it becomes evident that the video shown in the

first room is the result of the videos from the second room, an artificially constructed demonstration of emotion, geared towards stereotypes.

Simon Senn travelled through the townships in South Africa during the summer 2010 to get an idea about the established stereotypes that the world outside the townships has developed about these areas and their inhabitants, as well as how the residents themselves deal with certain clichés and expectations to which they are subjected to. They appear to have silently accepted their situation and can only be pulled out of this lethargic state through the promise of diversity by strangers. This gives them impetus to thus stand up and proclaim their opinion and to react against this assumed stereotyping and in what way they, if at all, identify with it. In face of the different reactions which alternate between euphoria and shyness, fun and sincerity the group dynamic is noticeable in both videos in the second room, which relies on the fact that life is changing for the six men at least for a moment and on the other side out of a collective emotion. Despite the individual statements, the essence of the messages of all participants is the same, a collective dissatisfaction.



Clichy-sous-Bois (2010)
Video installation (5 min.), HDV



Two young residents of Clichy-sous-Bois are introducing themselves and are answering the questions from the interview given to them. The questions are constructed from derogatory stereotypes associated with youth and are openly provocative, moralistic and pejorative. Gradually, they begin to get excited and end up by attacking the cameraman who runs away.

The video is separated in two episodes: the interview and the attack. By reversing the temporality of the narrative in showing the violent reaction before its provocation, the video starts with a spectacular action.

From this audio-visual equipment, two videos are taken: one from the interview and another to assault the cameraman. The video installation,

presented in two separate areas: the assault on a video projection and the interview on a screen.

The underlying theme of this installation video is our relationship to mass medias that forge or influence public opinion such as television, newspapers, radio or internet. Even more, how do the images produced by such information systems affect our relation to society and further, how do this relationship we have with society acquire an economical value.



The project is aiming to question our representations of youth and all the negative traits expressed by the medias such as violence or irresponsibility. How come today's youth have such a negative image in the eye of the public? Is the young portion of society stigmatized by an ever-aging majority? How do we participate in the creation of stereotypes expressed by the medias and thereafter nourish collateral damage? Do mass medias really profit from such shocking images?

This video tries to deconstruct how our mediatised sense of judgment and perception works. Therefore, it provokes tense and sometimes ambiguous relations to the subjects being filmed and thus shows how we use violence and falsely objective opinions to secure an illusion of our integrity.



Le bois-des-frères (2009)

Four synchronized high definition videos (9 min.)

The action unveils in a forest at fall. Lines traced on the ground delimit a playing field. Two teams, both formed by two players, all of which are dressed in white, are playing a game in which the goal is to slam an opponent to the ground in his own area.

Four cameramen are filming the entire scene. Each cameraman is assigned an unique player. At the beginning of each game, the players exchange looks for a length of 10 seconds with the cameraman that is to follow him.





18h15 (2008)
900 photos 10*15 cm
Digital camera and MiniDV camcor-
der

Eighteen individuals dressed in black surround a nude individual, and are directed to take as much pictures of him as possible. The action goes on for three minutes. Nine hundred pictures are taken. They are sorted out in chronological order, printed and arranged in a square of thirty times thirty.





CV

Simon Senn

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Born 1986 in La Chaux-de-Fonds (CH)

Education

2007-2010 HEAD, Geneva

University of Art and Design

2011 Postgraduate in Journalism

at the London School of Journalism

Solo exhibitions

2011

- Opening, Arcomadrid, Madrid
(with Jerome Zodo Contemporary)

2010

- Video Review, Jerome Zodo Contemporary, Milano (I)
- Participatory Panopticon, CACT Centro d'Arte Contemporanea del Ticino, Bellinzona
- Simon Senn, Galerie Nicola von Senger, Zürich

Group exhibitions

2010

- Lust and Vice. The seven deadly sins from Dürer to Nauman, Kunstmuseum Bern
- Dans un deuxième temps (1), Piano Nobile, Geneva
- Timing, Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (I)
- (Ex)communicate, Jerome Zodo Contemporary, Milano (I)

2009

- Lèche vitrine, Espace Temporaire, Geneva
- Complete control, Apex, Göttingen, (DE)
- Chassez le naturel, Villa Bernasconi, Lancy
- Swiss Art Awards 2009, Basel
- Définitions, Photoforum pasquart, Biel
- Unter 30, Kunstmuseum Thun

Performances

2009

- Best of Act, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel
- Art of Encountering, Kaskadenkondensator, Basel

Performances with the Californium

248 collective

2010

- Performance project, Liste 15 – The Young Art Fair, Basel
- Afterpiece: Performance Art on Video, Claudia Groeflin Galerie, Zürich

2009

- Lust Macht Kunst, Kunstmuseum Thun
- Mit freundlichen Grüßen, La Bellone, Bruxelles (B)
- Série Romandie, Kaserne, Basel
- Happy Body, Agent Double, Geneva

Awards / Scholarships

2010

- Bea Young Artists Foundation, Geneva
- Premio - Prix d'encouragement pour les arts de la scène (with Californium 248)

2009

- Artist residency: Théâtre de l'Usine, Geneva (with Californium 248)
- Kiefer Hablitzel Award

Public collections

Kunsthaus Zürich