

POLYPHONIES

APRIL 18 - JUNE 13 2015

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Sophie Castonguay, *Isegoria*, 2011. Performance with reciters.
Courtesy of the artist. Photo : Simon Gosselin

Curator

VÉRONIQUE LEBLANC

Artists

DAVE BALL & OLIVER WALKER,
KAYA BEHKALAM & AZIN FEIZABADI,
SOPHIE CASTONGUAY, EMMANUELLE LÉONARD,
ANNE-MARIE OUELLET, KATARINA ZDJELAR

Marie-Josée Lafortune
Director
mjlafortune@optica.ca

5445, avenue de Gaspé, #106
Montréal, QC
H2T 3B2
514-874-1666

OPENING

SATURDAY, APRIL 18
3 PM - 7 PM

PERFORMANCES

ANNE-MARIE OUELLET 3:30 PM
SOPHIE CASTONGUAY 4:30 PM

PRESS CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, APRIL 16
10 AM

POLYPHONIES

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CURATOR

VÉRONIQUE LEBLANC

ARTISTS

DAVE BALL & OLIVER WALKER, KAYA BEHKALAM &
AZIN FEIZABADI, SOPHIE CASTONGUAY,
EMMANUELLE LÉONARD, ANNE-MARIE OUELLET,
KATARINA ZDJELAR

The voices are also gazes, points of view, and postures. Their encounter within these works challenges us to a negotiation.

Polyphonies is an exhibition that stages a plurality of voices while bringing together the work of eight artists including two duos. Whether based on documentary approaches (interviews, surveys) resembling anthropological field studies or revolving around the invention of fictional situations in which archives of various kinds are played out, the orchestration of speech in the artists' propositions creates a disjunctive gap with the documented reality. They appropriate ways of telling stories (in past, present, and future tenses) to bring out issues in the ideological and identity-related constructions that take shape through speech.

Built as polyphonic structures or using polyphony as a method, the works in the exhibition sound out the complexity of relationships between individuality and community. Each of the works establishes a discursive space in which personal conviction, belief, and individual experience encounter social and institutional spheres. From standardization to dissent, from subjection to self-determination, and especially in the constant negotiation between these extremes, the works all refer to the makeup of public and political spaces and to the conditions of possibility for living-together.

In accord with their polyphonic dimension, the exhibition proposes to envisage these works as so many "voices" from distinct social, political, and historical contexts, reverberating in one another and resonating with shared, more global preoccupations. Concerned with notions of belonging, difference, representation, normativity, and sharing, they interrogate the power relationships that are established through language, along with the process by which identity-related and ideological constructs take part in articulating shared life and experience.

- Véronique Leblanc

Translation: Ron Ross

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Free entrance

The Centre is opened:
TUESDAY - FRIDAY: 10 AM - 5 PM
SATURDAY: 12 PM - 5 PM

VÉRONIQUE LEBLANC was born in 1982 in Jonquière. She lives and works in Montréal.

Véronique Leblanc is a Montréal-based curator and writer. She has curated shows featuring the work of Artur Żmijewski (Poland), Paul Wiersbinski (Germany), Dave Ball (UK), Jean-Pierre Aubé, Patrick Beaulieu, Douglas Scholes, Jean-Pierre Gauthier, and ATSA (Canada), among others. Awarded the John R. Porter Prize in 2015 for her essays on Emmanuelle Léonard and Artur Żmijewski, she participated in the first M&M Curatorial Research Residency Program in Mexico in 2013 (Oboro, Montréal / Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Mexico City) and in the CALQ Research residency for independent curators at the ISCP in Brooklyn in 2014. Leblanc has an MA in art history from Université du Québec à Montréal, where she now teaches.

CONFERENCE-PERFORMANCE

Thursday, April 16 - 7 PM

***On Projection* by Kaya Behkalam and Azin Feizabadi**

This lecture stems from a collaborative research that pans through various notions of projection. It was conceived in January 2013 by Kaya Behkalam, Azin Feizabadi and Jens Maier-Rothe, and for the first time presented in the form of a lecture at the Video Vortex #9 Conference at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, Germany.

Points of departure are the philosophical and psychological facets of the term projection, alongside its associated cultural practices and their political dimensions. Shuttling between the interstices of 'reality' and 'fiction' the research framework aims to connect different historical events and movements, including various cinematic and political activist approaches since 1945, with the manifold spatial and temporal interfaces they have brought to light. Having started in Cairo on the second anniversary of the so-called Arab Spring, the point of view for this collaborative research is persistently defined by the lens of a specific time and place in which it began.

In English and German

Goethe-Institut Montréal
1626, St-Laurent boulevard, unit 100,
Montréal, QC, H2X 2T1

OPENING

Saturday, April 18 - 3 PM - 7 PM

Performances

Anne-Marie Ouellet - *Penser le futur* - 3:30 PM

Sophie Castonguay - *Isegoria* - 4:30 PM

DISCUSSION

Sunday, April 19 - 3 PM

***Dinner Party* with Dave Ball and Oliver Walker**

Dave Ball and Oliver Walker invite you for an early happy hour to participate in a structured discussion about their *Dinner Party* project. You will accompany ex-participants in creating a lively debate about some of the issues thrown up by the project.

In English with simultaneous translation

Booking essential: 514-874-1666 or info@optica.ca

Broue Pub Brouhaha
5860, de Lorimier avenue
Montréal, QC, H2G 2N9

PERFORMANCES

Saturday, April 25 - 2 PM

Thursday, May 14 - 7:30 PM

***Penser le futur*, performance in an installation by Anne-Marie Ouellet**

Penser le futur stages a bureaucratic space the narrative potential of which is generated from two “newspapers.” In the performance, the artist transforms the context described within these documents into a conversation between two protagonists and an avatar on the future of public, home, and political spaces.

GUIDED TOURS

Every Saturday during the exhibition from April 25 until June 13

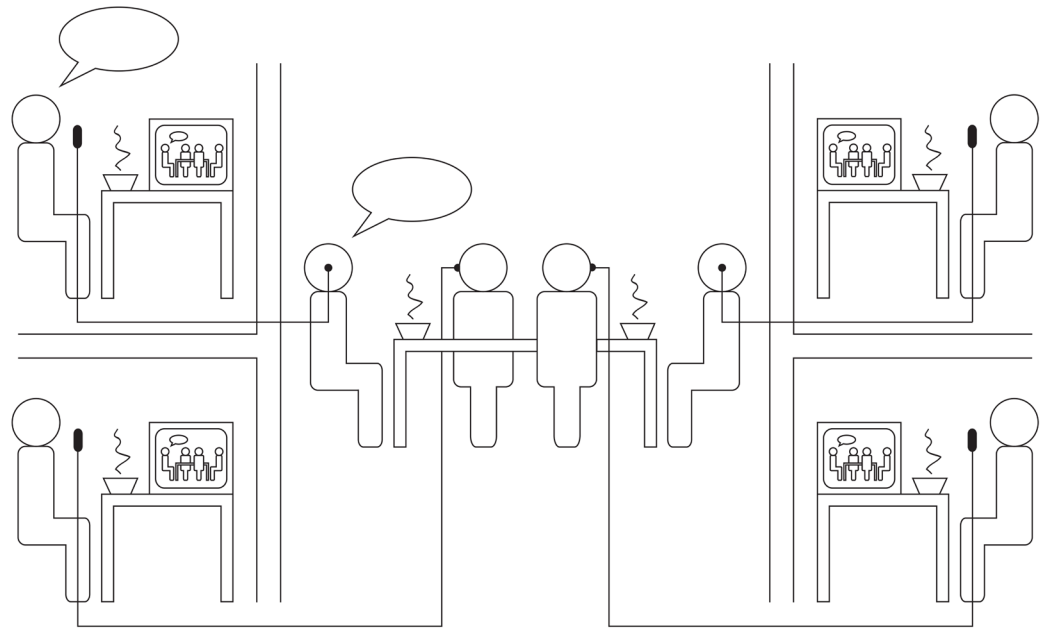
Local guide

Sunday, April 26 - 2 PM

As part of Foire papier 2015

Guided Tour of the Exhibition *Polyphonies* with Curator Véronique Leblanc

The exhibition *Polyphonies* brings together works based on participatory and performative processes generated by a variety of voices. Curator Véronique Leblanc offers a guided tour articulated around the role played by printed documents in the works of Kaya Behkalam and Azin Feizabadi, and Anne-Marie Ouellet.



Dave Ball & Oliver Walker, *Dinner Party*, 2011-2015. Participatory Live Art Project.

Dinner Party (2011-2015), a participatory project by Dave Ball and Oliver Walker (United Kingdom/Germany), calls upon eight characters who've never met and who accept to take part in a "mediatized" discussion around a meal served by the artists. Four of the guests, concealed in various rooms, use phones and earpieces to animate the discussion of the other four, who are seated at the table in main room. Recreated in Montréal, April 15 to 22, 2015, the experience interrupts the usual modes of socialization by decoupling verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.

DAVE BALL was born in 1978 in Swansea (UK). He lives and works in Wales and Berlin.

Educated at Goldsmiths College (MA), London, and University of Derby (BA), UK, Dave Ball is represented by Galerie Art Claims Impulse, Berlin. Exhibitions include *Searching for the Welsh Landscape*, Aberystwyth Arts Centre (solo), Wales, 2016; *To Make the Improbable*, Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Québec, 2013; *A to Z: From Aardvark to Axle*, Galerie Art Claims Impulse (solo), Berlin, 2013; *Making Mirrors*, NGBK, Berlin, 2011. Residencies include Aberystwyth Arts Centre, 2014; Est-Nord-Est, Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Québec, 2013; Künstlerhäuser Worpswede, Germany, 2009. www.daveballartist.co.uk

OLIVER WALKER was born in 1980 in Liverpool (UK). He lives and works in Berlin and Liverpool.

Oliver Walker uses live art, interventions, and video to investigate social and political systems. He studied Fine Arts at University of the West of England in Bristol (UK) and at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK). In 2012 he was awarded a residency from the Senate of Berlin in Cité internationale des Arts, Paris. In 2013 he received a grant from the Arts Council England for his project *One Euro*, which has since been shown at FACT (Liverpool), Trasmediale (Berlin), and is nominated for Ars Electronica (Linz, Austria) in 2015. oliverwalker.org



Kaya Behkalam & Azin Feizabadi, *The Negotiation*, 2010. Video still.

The video installation *The Negotiation* (2010), jointly produced by Kaya Behkalam (Germany/Egypt) and Azin Feizabadi (Iran/Germany), observes the conflictual relationships that develop between members of a group discussing their conceptions of revolution. In a dual projection, the actors' voices alternate with the voice of a narrator while also interacting with visual and textual elements that influence the discussion. In a kind of narrative stratification, this work examines representation, the reinterpretation of recent history, and the development of an imaginative world.

KAYA BEHKALAM was born in 1978 in Berlin (Germany). He lives and works in Berlin and Cairo.

Kaya Behkalam studied at Berlin University of the Arts and is currently pursuing a doctorate in free art at the Bauhaus University in Weimar. Among the venues to have displayed his work are Queens Museum, New York; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid; and Kunstverein Heidelberg. His work *Excursions in the Dark* (2011) received the Dialogue Award at the European Media Art Festival. Behkalam is currently teaching at the American University in Cairo.
kayabehkalam.net

AZIN FEIZABADI was born in 1983 in Teheran, Iran. He lives and works in Berlin.

Artist and filmmaker, Azin Feizabadi studied at The New School in New York (MFA 2011). His works have been shown in Museum Ostwall, Dortmund (2014); Exhibition Space Beirut, Cairo (2013); Heidelberger Kunstverein (2012); n.b.k., Berlin (2010); the 10th Sharjah Biennial (2011); Queens Museum, New York (2010); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2010); Silkroad Gallery, Tehran (2009); NGBK, Berlin (2008), among others. Since 2009, he has worked on a long-term multidisciplinary research project entitled *A Collective Memory*. He is currently a research fellow at the Graduiertenschule of University of the Arts Berlin.
azinfeizabadi.com

OPTICA CENTRE D'ART CONTEM- PORAIN



Sophie Castonguay, *Isegoria**, 2011. Performance with reciters. Photo : Simon Gosselin.

With the performative installation *La part du lion* (2015), Sophie Castonguay (Québec) convenes spectators to an unfolding, multivalent discourse set before a series of paintings created by her peers. Performed by a reciter and asserting the role of language in the very act of perception, the work places the visitor in a zone of uncertainty between a painted and a projected image, between the visible and the sayable, in short, between that which is present and the meaning created in a given situation.

SOPHIE CASTONGUAY was born in 1974 in the Montréal region. She lives and works in Val-Morin and Montréal.

Sophie Castonguay has presented her work in exhibition centres throughout Québec (AXENÉO7, DARE-DARE, Dazibao, Praxis, SBC, Skol, Verticale, Vidéographe), Canada (Fado, xspace, Third Space, Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario), and abroad (Hangar in Barcelona, Projektraum54 in Basel, FIAC in Paris, Art Basel in Miami). She is currently pursuing a doctorate in art studies and practices at Université du Québec à Montréal, where she has been teaching at the École des arts visuels et médiatiques since 2008.

mrcx.ca/sophie

*The performance *Isegoria*, created by Sophie Castonguay for UQAM's AGORA space in 2011, will be reactualized during the opening. Some twenty narrators with earphones orchestrated by the artist will recite excerpts from historical, literary and political speeches of major figures in the history of Québec.

OPTICA CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN



Anne-Marie Ouellet, *Penser le futur*, 2011-2015. Performative installation.

The performative installation project *Penser le futur* (2013-2015) developed by Anne-Marie Ouellet (Québec) rearranges the results of a survey conducted among 187 people about their general views on the future. By manipulating the responses given her, Ouellet interrogates the mechanics of polarization and normalization that take effect in manufacturing public opinion.

ANNE-MARIE OUELLET was born in 1982 in Rimouski. She lives and works in Montréal.

With an MFA from Université du Québec à Montréal (2011), Anne-Marie Ouellet has exhibited in Québec, at the Maison des arts de Laval (2013), Galerie de L'UQAM in Montréal (2011), the Manif d'art 4 in Québec City (2008), and at the Musée régional de Rimouski (2005). She also participated in events and artist residencies in Québec (PRAXIS, Ste-Thérèse, 2012, and DARE-DARE, Montréal, 2012), France (FRAC/Alsace, 2006), and Germany (B_Tour Festival, Berlin, 2013).

www.anne-marieouellet.com

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Emmanuelle Léonard, *La taverne*, 2015. Video still.

Produced in collaboration with a small group of the regulars and personnel of a neighborhood bar, Québec artist Emmanuelle Léonard's *La taverne* (2015) features a succession of individuals addressing the camera. Their preoccupations and opinions inscribe the expression of personal experience into the social life of the milieu while situating the protagonists between marginality and the stereotypical.

EMMANUELLE LÉONARD was born in 1971 in Montréal, where she lives and works.

Emmanuelle Léonard has taken part in numerous solo and group exhibitions, in Québec and abroad: Kunsthaus Dresden in Dresden; Neuer Berliner Kunstverein in Berlin; Glassbox in Paris; Mercer Union in Toronto; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, OPTICA, VOX, and Mois de la photo à Montréal; L'Œil de poisson in Québec City; and Expression in St-Hyacinthe. Awarded the Prix Pierre-Ayot in 2005 and nominated for the Grange Prize in 2012, she was a finalist for the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec's contemporary art award in 2014.

emmanuelleleonard.org



Katarina Zdjelar, *Don't Do it Wrong*, 2007. Video still.

In the video *Don't Do It Wrong* (2007), Katarina Zdjelar (Serbia/the Netherlands) examines the moment during which, every morning, schoolchildren sing the national anthem at the beginning of the day in an Istanbul primary school. While the pupils' arrangement in rows suggests a "collective body" in which the individual is at one with the nation, the children's behaviour is constantly fracturing the unity that is being imposed upon them.

KATARINA ZDJELAR was born in 1979 in Belgrade. She lives and works in Rotterdam.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Towards a Further Word*, Kunstverein Bielefeld, Germany (2014); *Of More Than One Voice*, Museum of Contemporary Art ARTIUM, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain (2013); *Stepping In-Out*, Center for Contemporary Art Celje, Slovenia (2011); *Parapoetics*, TENT Centrum Beeldende Kunst, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2009); *But if you take my voice what will be left to me?*, Serbian Pavillion at the 53rd Venice Biennial (2009). Selected group exhibitions include *M/Other Tongue*, curated by Sabel Gavaldon, Tenderpixel, London (2014); *Father Can't You See I'm Burning*, De Appel Contemporary Art Centre, Amsterdam (2014); *Acts of Voicing*, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart (2012); *Rearview Mirror*, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery Toronto (2011). katarinazdjelar.net



galerie **leonard
& bina
ellen**
art gallery

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THE TEAM

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Since its foundation in 1972, OPTICA has engaged in promoting contemporary art and raising the profile of Montreal on the national and international arts scenes. Every year, OPTICA presents a varied program of exhibitions, symposia, school-based workshops and encounters with the public, while investing in curated exhibitions based on themes developed and researched at the centre. In partnership with art3 (Valence, France), OPTICA's residency program encourages the development of emerging practices. All these activities support critical reflection on current issues in art and stimulate the creation of new works, sustained and accompanied by the production of relevant publications. OPTICA's new location in Montreal's Mile End neighbourhood includes a documentation centre and a space for dialogue and exchange, the AGORA, which serves as a forum for encounters with the public, promoting exchange and dialogue on its exhibition, residencies and community projects.

Proposals are received annually, in winter. Proposals from artists and curators, as well as those from candidates applying for the research residency Montréal / Valence (FR) (for Québec residents only) are assessed by a committee.

The centre also proceeds by invitation in order to remain flexible and current. Occasionally, the centre puts out thematic calls to curate exhibitions that group works featuring a variety of approaches.

Created in 1992, the OPTICA Archives are administered by Concordia University Archives. They consist of documents related to the centre's programming activities since its founding. The public is invited to make an appointment with the librarian at Concordia University Archive or to consult the centre's digital archives on our website under the Decades section http://www.optica.ca/decades/fonds_documentaire_en.php.

Internationally, OPTICA has distinguished itself with curatorial projects in Europe and the United States, as well as through its participation at the Art Forum Berlin international fair.

OPTICA CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

5. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

FREE ENTRANCE

The exhibition is opened from Tuesday to Saturday from 12 PM to 5 PM
Closed on Sundays and Mondays

FREE GUIDED TOURS

Every Saturdays from April 25 to June 13

Groups : reservation required
514-874-1666 | mediation@optica.ca

5445, avenue de Gaspé, #106
Montréal, QC
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ACCESS

Laurier or Rosemont Metro (orange line) 10 minutes walk

Buses - 55 St-Laurent | 27 St-Joseph

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The curator wishes to thank the artists for the wealth of their contributions to this exhibition project, and everybody at OPTICA for their confidence and exceptional work, as well as the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec for its support. She is also immensely grateful to Saada El-Akhrass, Steven Armede, Jean-François Tessier, Dominique Allard, Hugo Blouin, Ariane de Blois, Marie Frampier, Claire Moeder, and Érika Wicky for informed and sensitive observations that have had a crucial impact on the project.

OPTICA is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, and the Conseil des arts de Montréal. OPTICA educational program is supported by the ministère de la Culture et des Communications and the City of Montreal (as part of the Entente sur le développement culturel de Montréal), and the Caisse Desjardins du Mont-Royal, Caisse Desjardins de l'Est du Plateau, and Caisse Desjardins des Versants du mont Royal. OPTICA is a member of the Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec and of Regroupement Pied Carré.



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