



## Le petit journal n° 73

Allora & Calzadilla, Fayçal Baghriche, Dora García, Robert Gober, Joseph Grigely,  
Rodney Graham, Loreto Martínez Troncoso, Fiorenza Menini, Roman Ondák,  
Sylvain Rousseau, Miri Segal, Virginie Yassef

***Wake up, Please* exhibition from July 3 to October 25, 2009**

**leQuartier**

Centre d'art contemporain de Quimper

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# Wake up, Please

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The exhibition *Wake up, Please* brings together works by thirteen artists using different modes of expression to explore art's ability to whet the viewer's consciousness.

Tweaking genres and materials, transforming familiar objects and undermining established representational codes, the works on show are offered as both critical tools and means for effecting a sensory approach. While remaining rooted in their original context, they set out to stimulate viewers' perception by inviting them to explore the outer limits of individual experience.

Thus the *Wake up, Please* artists challenge the visitor with a subjective vision that intermingles aesthetic stances, political commitments, aspects of popular culture and imaginary narratives. While dissimilar in terms of form and signification, the works reveal certain common denominators: the building

of a collective memory, the critical moment or the animal cry that fires our sensory perceptions, and the metaphor of a physical awakening calling for our conscious presence in the world.

## Building a collective memory

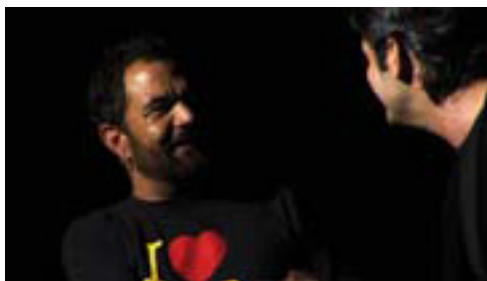
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By endowing a singular context with universal significance, **Allora & Calzadilla**, in their video *Returning a Sound* (2004), celebrate the ending of United States missile tests on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. Using the sound of a trumpet attached to a motorcycle exhaust pipe, the artists come up with an anthem at once exhilarating and harrowing as they raise the issue of collective identity. This political dimension is equally present in **Sylvain Rousseau's** installation *White Sands* (2008): made with sintering powder and imitating neon sign writing, the work bears the name of a national park in New Mexico whose gypsum dunes are used by the army for missile testing. This association of two contradictory realities points up the gap between the meaning of the words and their physical substance. The ability of objects to suggest or transform a specific material or state of consciousness is also to be found in the photolithographs produced by **Robert Gober** during the Bush/Clinton presidential election in 1992. Looking just like newspapers, they examine the connections between politics and an aesthetic experience rooted in the everyday.

Dora García

*Just Because Everything is Different It Does Not Mean That Anything Has Changed: Lenny Bruce In Sidney*, 2008 - vidéo (60')

Courtesy galerie Michel Rein, Paris



Interestingly in this context, **Dora García** takes a news item as a pretext for waking up the viewer: using her performance *What a Fucking Wonderful Audience!* and her video *Just Because Everything Is Different It Does Not Mean That Anything Has Changed: Lenny Bruce In Sydney* (2008) for a fresh take on the storm that blew up around the American comedian in Sydney in 1962, the artist reminds us that while works considered outrageous at a particular point in the past have modified the relationship between artist and viewer, their reception can still be a matter for debate today and can put social change into perspective. And in the installation *Remembering is a Difficult Job, but Somebody Has to Do It*, (2005), **Joseph Grigely** takes a look at the importance of memory. Despite being deaf, Grigely tries to sing the signature tune of the TV series *Gilligan's Island*, dating from when he was a child. This is his way of reflecting on the relationship between individual and collective recall.

## The animal cry

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The dog Grigely has «lifted» from the Canaletto painting for his sculpture *Dog from Canaletto's Riva Degli Schiavoni* (2003) functions as an intermediary between the beholder and a group of people shown conversing in the picture. While the dog initially signalled the aural environment and the communication taking place in an eighteenth-century Italian city, here it calls on the viewer to focus on his surroundings. Another sound – absolutely real this time – vibrates through **Virginie Yassef's** «theatrical» installation *To Wake Him Up, All It Takes Is A Breath* (2008), in which an elephant playing the part of a Trojan horse emits a muffled noise – of imminent revolt? The exhortation «Wake up, please!» – the starting point for the exhibition at Le Quartier – is uttered like a cry of alarm by the parrot in **Rodney Graham's** film *Vexation Island* (1997). It is a summons

both to the artist as protagonist of the film and to the viewers, while at the same time interlinking different states of consciousness in an endlessly repeated story. For her video installation *Whatever You Say* (2008) **Miri Segal** has also opted for a parrot as a way of creating a participatory space in which words can circulate freely. Simultaneously personifying the visitor and setting him at a distance, the bird offers him the opportunity to thwart his own automatic reflexes.

## From the awakening to the (missed) rendezvous

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**Roman Ondák's** *Announcement* (2002) addresses the viewer directly: «As a sign of solidarity with recent world events, for the next minute do not interrupt the activity you are doing at this moment.» Issued every four minutes, this paradoxical injunction interrupts a radio news broadcast, calling into question the point of a social practice removed from its original context. **Fayçal Baghriche's** installation *Snooze* (2004/09) examines strategies aimed at catching viewers' attention: skirting the conventions of entertainment, two hundred radio alarm clocks go off together at seven in the morning, when the exhibition is still closed. This is a work whose ongoing impact lies in the narratives it sparks. Hypertemporality is also the key to *White Tone* (2009), a work created by **Fiorenza Menini** at the invitation of Le Quartier: based on a video recording of silence speeded up ten thousand times, the work evokes a degree zero of alertness and makes the visitor prick up his ears. Together with the performance by the artist planned for the close of the exhibition, **Loreto Martínez Troncoso's** video *...mais où ê(te)s vous/tu physiquement?* (2008) reminds viewers that in addition to its awakening function and capacity to modify perception, art is first and foremost a «rendezvous».