



# Subterfuge

**Julia Brown, Chto Delat?, Jacopo Natoli  
Ana Pečar + Oliver Ressler, Alessandro Rolandi**

**curated by Mike Watson**

Opening: Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, 6.00 pm

19.01.2014 – 15.03.2014

The Gallery Apart is proud to present 'Subterfuge', a show curated by Mike Watson in which a group of international artists present works which explore art's capacity to evade the usual channels of governance, communication, welfare and education, leveraging the ostensible autonomy of art to create novel alternative channels of communication which circumvent the problems of the concrete political and social realm.

We live in uncertain and unknowable times for which the history of political thought seems inadequate. It is not enough to say that truth is fractured or that our ethical code is bought into question, for the loss of a binary mode of thinking – left-right, right-wrong, boom-bust, etc - robs us of the false yet dearly held distinctions which would allow for a rational analysis. We are left subject to the unpredictable movements of a finance mechanism created by us but unfathomable to us.

Whilst Politics is reducible to soundbites, Religion takes on extremist forms which parody the certainty of a bygone age and Science is put into the service of capital, 'Art' remains an unknown and unknowable quantity perhaps equal to the chaotic unknowable nature of the finance mechanism which presides unwittingly over us.

If so the task for the socially engaged artist is to retain the abstract ungraspable element at Art's core, so as to match the abstraction of the financial mechanism whilst providing concrete responses to societal problems by way of 'subterfuge': a deceptive sophistry used to achieve a goal or end.

Russian collective Chto Delat? and artists Oliver Ressler (Austria) and Ana Pecar (Slovenia) present respectively 'Shivering with Iris' and 'In the Red', two world premiere films which explore, respectively, alternatives to education and to our debt culture.

Alessandro Rolandi – born in Italy and working in Beijing – presents 'Message to the West', in collaboration with Chinese artists, allowing communication across cultures thereby evading the heavy censure which keeps two distinct yet connected realities apart in a deep misunderstanding of one another.

American artist Julia Brown presents 'The Swim', a series of works drawing upon research into the Wade-Ins of the segregated USA in which both white and black bathers defied a ban on mixed bathing in 1964.

Jacopo Natoli (Italian) works in collaboration with Dionigi Mattia Gagliardi and the collective Spazi Docili, producing an installation examining issues of property, empty space and occupation in Rome's Testaccio.

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**Subterfuge presents ongoing research conducted by curator Mike Watson under the title 'Joan of Art'. The Joan of Art project – founded in collaboration with Nomad Foundation in 2012 – aims at using the resources of the art world to rethink models of education and welfare. Research was recently conducted at the 55th Venice Biennale.**

**See [www.joanofart.net](http://www.joanofart.net).**

**INFO:****EXHIBITION:** Subterfuge**ARTISTS:** Julia Brown, Chto Delat?, Jacopo Natoli, Ana Pečar + Oliver Ressler, Alessandro Rolandi**CURATED BY:** Mike Watson**VENUE:** The Gallery Apart – Via Francesco Negri, 43, Roma**VERNISSAGE:** Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, 6.00 pm**DURATION OF THE EXHIBITION:** 19.01.2014 – 15.03.2014**HOURS:** Tuesday – Saturday 3.00 pm – 7.00 pm and on appointment**INFO:** The Gallery Apart – tel/fax 0668809863 – info@thegalleryapart.it – www.thegalleryapart.it**Julia Brown** (Ypsilanti, Michigan, USA; 1978)

Julia Brown received her MFA from CalArts in 2006 and BA in studio art from Williams College in 2000. Brown was a 2010 recipient of the Epson Prize and the 2006 of the Dedalus Foundation MFA Painting Award. Her work has exhibited in New York at Ogilvy + Mather, Art in General, The Kitchen, Scaramouche Gallery, Harvestworks Media Festival, Talman + Monroe, LMAK Projects, and the Artists Space Project Room; in Los Angeles at LACE and Supersonic at Barnsdall Gallery; Real Art Ways, Hartford; Provincetown Art Association Museum (PAAM); internationally at Via Farini, Milan, Kunsthalle Dusseldorf, Form Video, London, and Blank Projects, Cape Town. Has attended residencies including ViaFarini, The Whitney Independent Study Program, the Fondazione Ratti, the Whitney Independent Study Program, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and was a two time Visual Arts Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center. Brown is currently a Visual Arts Fellow at The Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and an Assistant Professor of Painting at George Washington University in Washington D.C.. She will begin a Smithsonian Institute Artist Research Fellowship in the Spring of 2014.

**Chto Delat?**

The collective *Chto Delat?* (What is to be done?) was founded in early 2003 in Petersburg by a workgroup of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers from St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. The group was constituted in May 2003 in St. Petersburg in an action called "The Refoundation of Petersburg." Shortly afterwards, the original, as yet nameless core group began publishing an international newspaper called *Chto Delat?*. The name of the group derives from a novel by the Russian 19th century writer Nikolai Chernyshevsky, and immediately brings to mind the first socialist worker's self-organizations in Russia, which Lenin actualized in his own publication, "What is to be done?" (1902). *Chto Delat?* sees itself as a self-organized platform for a variety of cultural activities intent on politicizing "knowledge production" through redefinitions of an engaged autonomy for cultural practice today.

The array of activities is coordinated by a core group including following members:

Tsapylya Olga Egorova (artist, Petersburg), Artiom Magun (philosopher, Petersburg), Nikolay Oleynikov (artist, Moscow), Natalia Pershina/Glucklya (artist, Petersburg), Alexey Penzin (philosopher, Moscow), David Riff (art critic, Moscow), Alexander Skidan (poet, critic, Petersburg), Oxana Timofeeva (philosopher, Moscow), and Dmitry Vilensky (artist, Petersburg). In 2012 the choreographer Nina Gasteva has joined a collective after few years of intense collaboration. Since then many Russian and international artist and researchers has participated in different projects realized under the collective name *Chto Delat?*

**Jacopo Natoli** (Rome; 1985)

Visual artist and experimental filmmaker. He studied Painting at the Rome Fine Arts Academy and Fine Art at the Chelsea College of Art and Design in London. He works with the forms of video-essay, documentary, audio-visual performance and text. He studies the language of moving-image: its form, politic and aesthetic. He is interested in conceptual and social marginality. He is conducting an interdisciplinary research on the aesthetic of the negative and the semiotic of Found footage film. Contributing editor of the magazine of art, research and progress nodes. With nodes he writes essays, realizes interviews and promotes events, performances and publications.

His works have been shown in festivals, museums and private galleries (i.e. *14<sup>th</sup> Festival for experimental and different cinema*, Paris, 2012; *Careof*, Milan, 2012; *Arts at CIIS, ATA*, San Francisco, 2012; *The Space, Nottingham Contemporary*, Nottingham, 2012; *Image festival*, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2012; *Chisenhale Gallery*, London, 2011, *Hackney wicked festival*, London 2010)

**Ana Pečar + Oliver Ressler**

Ana Pečar is video and intermedia artist. She is active as an organizer of public events through which she communicates artistic and collective currents. She achieved formal education on Corcoran School of art and University of Maribor and gained additional skills on numerous workshops and residencies. In her video work the social commentary is much more subtle and intertwines with mythologies and composed artistic spaces and imagined symbolism. Pečar's videos are part of Carinthian regional museum collection, Slovene video archive (DIVA station), European Archives of Media Art, and online Earth water catalogue (an artistic initiative to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of water).

Oliver Ressler (born in Knittelfeld, Austria, in 1970, lives and works in Vienna) is an artist and filmmaker who produces installations, projects in the public space, and films on issues such as economics, democracy, global warming, forms of resistance and social alternatives. Over the years, he collaborated with the artists Zanny Begg (Sydney), Ines Doujak (Vienna), Martin Krenn (Vienna), Gregory Sholette (New York), David Thorne (Los Angeles) and the political scientist Dario Azzellini (Caracas/Berlin).

**Alessandro Rolandi** (Pavia, 1971: Living and working in Beijing since 2003)

His work explores a thinner level of correspondences between, art, knowledge, social context and language. He uses different media: drawing, sculpture, installation, performance, photography, found objects, interventions, video and text. He observes, borrows, alters and documents reality to create possibilities that challenge our current socio-

political structure and point out the effects it has on our daily life and on our schemes of thought. He is the founder/director of the Social Sensibility Research & Development Department at Bernard Controls Asia currently ongoing. His work has been shown, among other venues at: Venice Biennale 2005 and 2011, WRO Wroclav Biennale 2011, CCD Photofestival Beijing 2009, 2010-2011, Museo Pecci, Milano 2011, MCAF Gent 2008, FUSO VideoArt Lisbon 2012, Under the subway, New York 2012, UCCA Beijing, 2012 and in Beijing Organic Farmers market. He was nominated by the Global Board of Contemporary Art among the best performance artists for the Alice Awards 2011 together with Megumi Shimizu for the performance "Something on the way".