

From: **KoProjects** <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-17 14:02 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact, 1-10 - Introduction
To:



MAKING CONTACT

An exhibition in 10 emails with the artworks of:

Marion Balac, Caroline Delieutraz, Arnaud Dezoteux, Paul Heintz, (LA)HORDE, Reija Meriläinen

Making Contact is an online exhibition that focuses on artworks that have arisen from the collaboration between an artist and a cultural producer - amateur or professional - who can be identified within their field.

The six artworks selected for this exhibition are the result of a negotiation between artists and cultural producers who have very differing practices. **Arnaud Dezoteux** worked with a Keanu Reeves' fan, **(LA)HORDE** with a small community of jumpstyler, **Reija Meriläinen** with a couple of Youtubers who destroy objects using a hydraulic press, **Caroline Delieutraz** with an ASMR specialist, **Paul Heintz** with a Chinese copyist painter and **Marion Balac** with ghostwriters 2.0.

The history of art is punctuated by artworks that have been produced in collaboration, with professionals of the art world and/or with outsiders, be they individuals or communities. More recently artworks have been made out of the gathering and utilization of content produced by other people on the Internet.

Making Contact aims to show collaborations that draw away from those manners in the production of making an artwork. Initiating a collaboration, the artist sets out a flexible framework in which the artwork that appears can be seen as the result of a negotiation.

Deciding to work with someone because of their creative competences, the artist chooses to take the chance of adding something to their own practice, the possibility of the unknown, unknown in both meaning of alterity and of unpredictability. It intends not to reproduce, nor to order, but to co-create; in other words to accept a leeway, the possibility for an error to occur, the willingness for a roll of the dice, that can change the direction that was supposed to be the intended one.

For each of the artworks presented in the exhibition we were interested in the various moments that built up the relationship between the collaborators: the first mail, making contact, in which the artist gets to introduce themselves, their practice and their first intention, then the negotiation that leads to the production of the artwork, finally its reception within the respective universe of the collaborator. These three steps are constitutive and the final artwork proves it.

These *negotiated artworks* are an invitation to consider, from another perspective, the porosity, proximity and distance between fields that steadily reshape their boundaries. Making Contact is an exploration of those territories. The aims of this exhibition are not to qualify or define, but to show realities that extend beyond current modes of art practice.

Warning: Some artworks will only be accessible online during the show



Image credit: (LA)HORDE

Making Contact is curated by **Caroline Delieutraz** and **Stephanie Vidal**, written for the first edition of [Slowly10](#), a project facilitated by **KoProjects**.

Caroline Delieutraz is interested in the circulation of images, their capture and their collection within a screen world. Stephanie Vidal is interested in the intersection of art, technology, and information. She writes, teaches and conceives exhibitions about these topics. They were both born in the 80's and live and work in Paris, France.

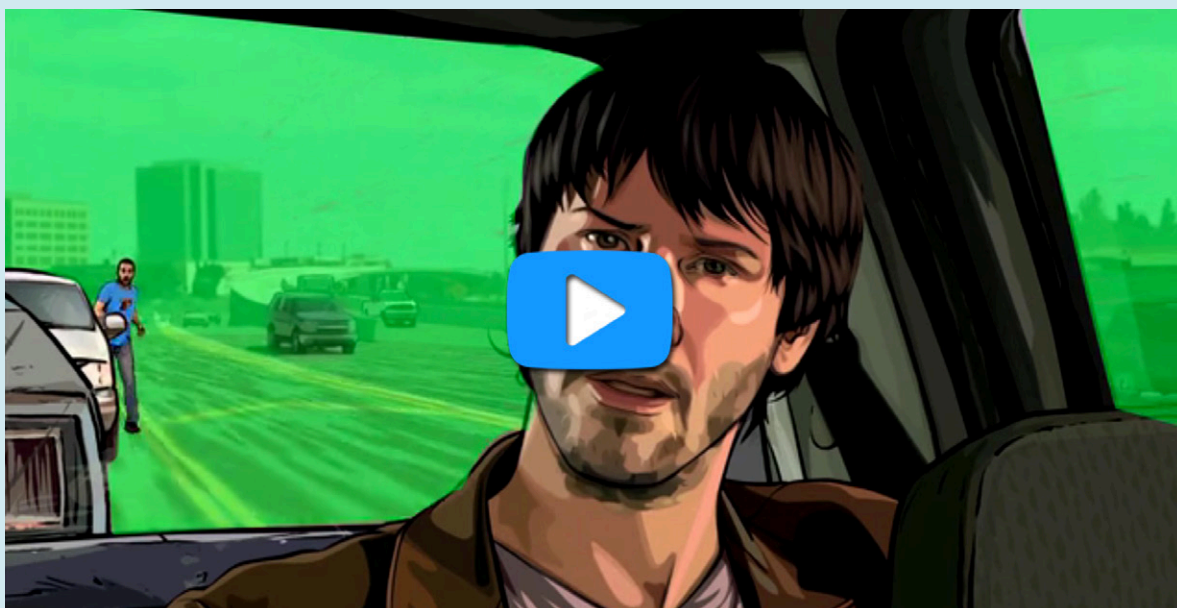
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ARNAUD DEZOTEUX

DARK META REEVES

2016, video HD, 29 min



<https://vimeo.com/153400983>

PASSWORD VIMEO : brise

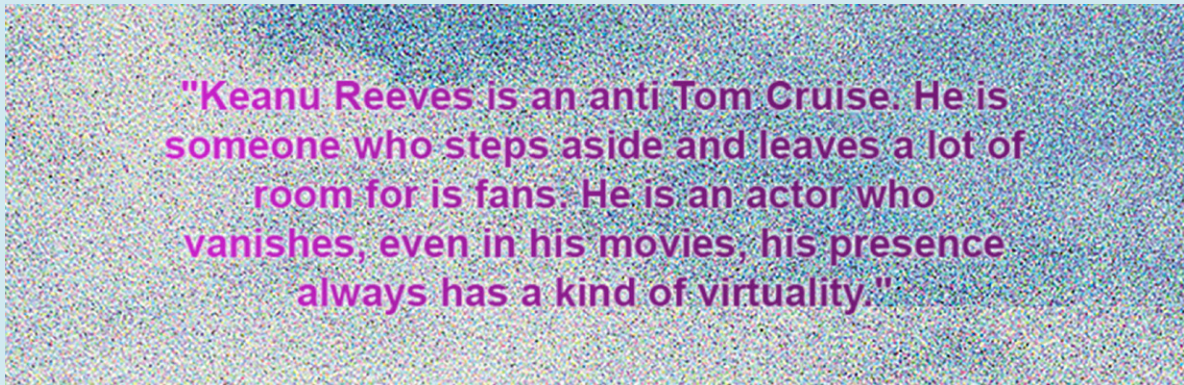
Arnaud Dezoteux is interested in mainstream cultures and in the American movies that shape them. From the bright hills to the movie theaters, Hollywood productions create ecosystems, fantasies and even cults around characters or actors. The personality and the career of Keanu Reeves gave him a certain aura : both reserved and mythical, the actor who played memorable and mystic parts, now reigns, without intending to, over a powerful fandom.

The star is a source of inspiration as a role model, a subject of worship but also as a theoretical object. Indeed, in 2016, French artist Arnaud Dezoteux chose Keanu Reeves as the main theme of his exhibition at Galerie Édouard Manet of the Municipal School of Fine Arts in Gennevilliers (France). The exhibition was titled "Brise fraîche au dessus des montagnes", in English "cool breeze over the mountains" which is the meaning of the name Keanu in the Hawaiian language. The movie *Dark Meta Reeves* was its main piece.

In *Dark Meta Reeves*, the main actor is Gavin, an American fan specialist of Keanu Reeves, who gets implanted with his idol within movies excerpts. Arnaud Dezoteux had to convince him to take part in this adventure, that made him the main actor and the co-creator of the film. Indeed, Gavin had to choose the excerpts he wanted to play in and extemporize all of his lines.

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-18 15:53 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 2 - 10, Arnaud Dezoteux
To:

Arnaud Dezoteux: "I didn't expect that Gavin would choose the scene of 'The Day the Earth Stood Still' with the interrogation. It's very powerful on a symbolic level. At the beginning he was asking very specific questions; I invited him to open up a little bit more but he was reluctant to do so. He was afraid that the spectator would not understand the difference between what was real and what was fictional. For him it didn't seem an option to blur the lines; whilst, as an artist I move on more fragile ground and as a director I try to transform situations into occasions."



Even if, thanks to the green screen, the fan and the star end up at the same level, Gavin's questions to Keanu Reeves remain unanswered. In a paradoxical way, the positions are reaffirmed. The fan is the one whose actions, in line with the actions of the star, extend them in order to create a proximity. The star is the one who, even omnipresent, always evades and remains inaccessible. The only real dialogue happened in between the artist and the fan. According to Arnaud Dezoteux, artists and fans share a lot: they would both be obsessionals, creative and part of an interpretative community with strict codes.



Arnaud Dezoteux lives and works in Paris, France.
<https://vimeo.com/arnauddezoteux>

(LA)HORDE

NOVACIÉRIES

2015, film, 16 min 43 s



<https://vimeo.com/130755101>

PASSWORD VIMEO: (LA)HORDE

(LA)HORDE is a collective composed of Marine Brutti, Jonathan Debrouwer and Arthur Harel. Formed in 2013, they are interested in videos of vernacular dance and in the community that produces them.

While they were doing online research, (LA)HORDE discovered a video on YouTube that made an impression in their minds: a Kid's Rave in Zandaam, Netherlands. Guided by the algorithm from one video to another, they ended up discovering Jumpstyle, a dance intended to be recorded that appeared at the end of the nineties in Belgium. Through the Internet, Jumpstyle has, since then, spread to other countries while developing stylistic variations. Jumpstyle also mutates according to technological innovations. For the first videos, side-on dance movements were recorded with webcams in teenagers' rooms. Nowadays, the tools for video recording have better image quality and are mobile. Smartphones and reflex cameras have changed videos backgrounds allowing the dance to be replaced within a more urban and social context.

In 2014, (LA)HORDE was invited by the École de Danse Contemporaine de Montréal to work with fifteen of their students. They built with them a spectacle about Jumpstyle and other Hard-dances, and in order to do so, they asked them to watch online tutorials, the same way anybody who wants to get to learn this dance would do.

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-19 15:08 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 3 - 10, Novaciéries by (LA)HORDE
To:

(LA)HORDE: "When we got back to France we felt a real necessity to meet the community. We had transformed an exercise, a desire, into a potential spectacle and we had the impression that some good questions hadn't been asked yet. We didn't want to attribute for ourselves the culture of a community that we didn't belong to. We wanted to start a real collaboration by meeting its authors. When Benjamin Loyauté invited us, in 2015, to suggest an artwork for Saint-Etienne' International Biennale of Design we immediately thought of the jumpers de l'Ain (French crew). It was first obvious for geographical reasons then, a pretext to create something together and to meet offline for the first time. This is how our first collaboration with the community started: the *Novaciéries*' movie."



In *Novaciéries*, the dance of the machines and the dance of the humans seem to jumble up when they, equally, hit the ground of an abandoned warehouse. In empty places, a strange syncretic world seeks to emerge. The movie always seems in tension: an Opera singer covers Hardcore to the bone by Neophyte, the Hardcore community anthem, customised balaclavas anonymise dancers like MrCovin and EDX who are known online for their moniker and kicks, reality appears wearing a safety vest, literally, to set the stage while fantasy roams and fights against exhaustion.

(LA)HORDE : "Working with artists-authors-autodidacts demand us more rigor. For them, the stakes are not to perform on major stages worldwide or that the movie is screened at the biggest film festivals. They don't really care about the niche notoriety they could get out of it. Their real public is online, it is composed of their community, their peers and you can count it by the thousands of YouTube views. This independence makes them very free. This allows a healthy collaboration because there is no way they can feel they owe us for some 'opportunity' we offer them. This is important for us and for them and this is central in our creations. We are happy, all together, that our artworks reach more people."

From: **KoProjects** <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-19 15:08 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 3 - 10, Novaciéries by (LA)HORDE
To:

MrCovin (jumper) : "For me, it was a challenge because, while we were working on *Novaciéries*, we had to dance without music and that made me consider stopping the collaboration. What we wore also didn't fit with the kind of clothes I wear in my videos => I am mainly talking about the balaclava. At the end we took the time to talk, despite the rush and the organisation, I ended up understanding the artistic process. And so, as I am a curious person, I accepted to play the game."



EDX (jumper) : "This collaboration was a challenge for me. As an autodidact, dancing in the street, it was the first time that professional artists and choreographers reached me. But the team's warm atmosphere and the part that we got to play put us at ease. We quickly came to like playing characters whilst practicing our dance. (LA)HORDE wanted to work with genuine Jumpstyle dancers and the filming took place without any trouble. At the end it was a successful gamble. They called us back again for others projects like *To Da Bone*, a contemporary dance piece about Jumpstyle with fifteen dancers."

Developing pieces that are made to be watched online, in theaters and even live, (LA)HORDE seems to suggest a definition for "post-internet dance". Post-Internet dances would be choreographical proposals made of movements that are conceived in accordance with the accessible technological tools that allow the recording and the spreading of videos: they are determined by the viewpoint of the device that records and by the frame set by the screen that broadcasts.

Le collectif (LA)HORDE lives and works in Paris, France.
www.collectiflahorde.com

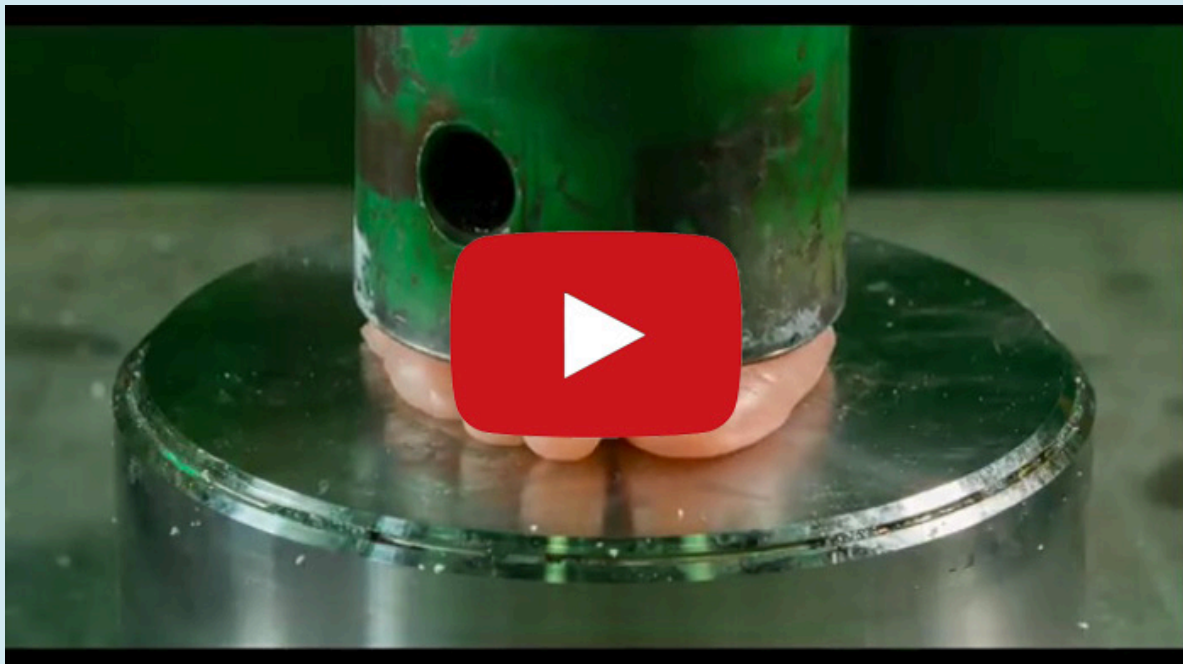
From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-20 13:54 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 4 - 10, Crush by Reija Meriläinen
To:

MAKING CONTACT #4

REIJA MERILÄINEN

CRUSH

2016, video and installation



Crush (ft. Hydraulic Press Channel)



Reija Meriläinen



S'abonner

6

265 vues



Ajouter à



Partager



Plus



7



1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1ehXYDAtAI>

Reija Meriläinen is a Finnish artist who tests material in order to question the violences that unfold on the body and the ambivalent fascinations aroused by videos uploaded online. To produce the video titled Crush, the artist met Lauri and Anni Vuohensilta, also from Finland, who created the YouTube Hydraulic Press Channel that is followed by approximately 1,748,758 people. When Meriläinen discovered the channel in early 2016, she felt that there was something inherently similar in HPC's videos to some of the work that she had been making, something to do with a visceral sense of material. Indeed, she uses ballistic gel, a material that shares similarities with human flesh, to create objects that she stabs or shoots.

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-20 13:54 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 4 - 10, Crush by Reija Meriläinen
To:



Reija Meriläinen : "I have been using this material to make sculptures with for several years. I really wanted to see this material crushed by a hydraulic press, so I contacted HPC to ask if I could make ballistic gel sculptures for them to crush, and seeing as we live in the same country, I asked if I could come film it for myself in 4K for an upcoming solo exhibition I had in September 2016. I also sent HPC some photos and videos of sculptures I had made from the material before, one of them being a set of toes (that also ended up in the *Crush* video), and they replied that a popular request from their viewers was to see a fake hand crushed. So I decided to make fake limbs – hands and feet."

Two videos resulted from this experience. Reija Meriläinen showed them both on her website. Although made out of the same video shooting their montage, their exhibition and their conservation are very different. The artist's video uses mesmerizing effects and is accompanied with a cover of the song *Crush* by Jennifer Paige. This soundtrack has been commissioned by Maria Korkeila for the video.

Ajoutée le 17 mai 2016

This video was bit too much for my other channel so I moved it here
Fake limbs were made by artist Reija Meriläinen <http://www.reijamerilainen.com>

Catégorie

People et blogs

Licence

Licence YouTube standard

MOINS

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-20 13:54 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 4 - 10, Crush by Reija Meriläinen
To:

On the other hand, HPC's video has a less sophisticated montage. Also, it has not been upload on the Hydraulic Press Channel, the main account of the Vuohensilta but on their alternative one 'Beyond The Press' that has a different editorial line, devoted to more creative destructions. The video presenting the destruction of Meriläinen's sculpture on the BTP's channel count more than 400,000 views; the artist's one, posted on her YouTube account, counts hundreds. These numbers make it obvious that exposure and notoriety have very different definitions for artists and YouTubers. Also, these definitions seem correlated with location, first its features (online or in physical space), then the possibility to be visible in a plurality of locations.

Reija Meriläinen : "Lauri and Anni from the Hydraulic Press Channel came for the opening of my exhibition where *Crush* was first shown. They seemed happy and amused by having their work presented in such a different way and in such a different context; in a gallery show. The *Crush* video ended up being purchased by the collections of a major contemporary art museum in Finland recently, and they seemed excited when I told them about it. But of course, I can't really speak for them."



Reija Meriläinen lives and works in Helsinki, Finlande.
<http://reijamerilainen.com>

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>

Date: 2017-07-21 10:52 GMT+02:00

Subject: Making Contact 5 - 10, ✨ Unboxing + tapping + whisper ✨ with Rikita ASMR (Embedded Files) by Caroline Delieutraz

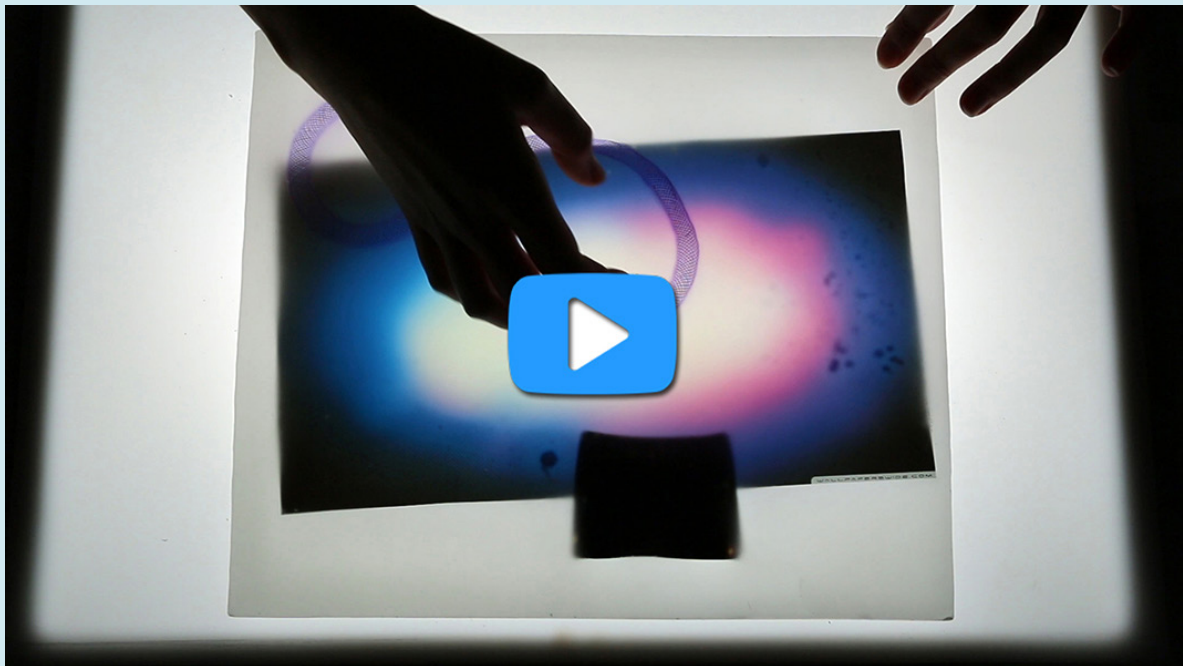
To:

MAKING CONTACT #5

CAROLINE DELIEUTRAZ

✨ UNBOXING + TAPPING + WHISPER ✨ WITH RIKITA ASMR (EMBEDDED FILES)

2017, video, 48 min 55 s



<https://vimeo.com/237724889>

PASSWORD VIMEO : unnamed feelings

Please wear headphones

The circulation of images, their capture and collection in a world of display screens, is a recurrent theme in Caroline Delieutraz's work. ✨ *Unboxing + tapping + whisper* ✨ with Rikita ASMR (Embedded Files) is the result of a collaboration with Rikita, a young YouTuber who makes ASMR videos. ASMR, or Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, is a widespread internet phenomenon that developed in 2008 thanks to YouTube. ASMR was originally practised by a small community of people who had found out that certain auditory and visual stimuli provoked a sensation of well-being that could sometimes culminate in what could be described as a non-sexual orgasm. For example, watching and listening to someone carefully handle an object can trigger the desired effect, known as *tingles*. The community has steadily grown these past few years. Through trial and error, certain triggers have been identified: whispering, tapping, cracking sounds and many other sub-categories.

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>

Date: 2017-07-21 10:52 GMT+02:00

Subject: Making Contact 5 - 10, ✨ Unboxing + tapping + whisper ✨ with Rikita ASMR (Embedded Files) by Caroline Delieutraz

To:



Caroline Delieutraz : "The object's value is determined by its potential as a trigger. A seemingly worthless object – a piece of wrapping material for example – can be of great value for ASMR. It is this reversal which interests me. I started by posting my own ASMR video on YouTube to see how it all worked, to understand the customs. My goal wasn't to replicate ASMR videos, but more to infiltrate its community, and this is why I handed over a series of works (*Embedded Files*) to Rikita, so that she could 'activate' them by revealing their ASMR potential."

Embedded Files evokes low-tech recording material. It is a collection of objects and images, chosen for their circulation rate and embedded in paraffin wax. Under the guise of a pseudonym, the young woman whispers binaurally into the ears of tens of thousands of internet users. She sometimes performs unboxing, an Anglicism that refers to filming oneself opening packages. She describes the *Embedded Files* as she opens and discovers them, placing each of them in turn over a light box, revealing their contents.

Caroline Delieutraz : "I chose to collaborate with Rikita because she's in control of her image – she only shows the bottom half of her face in her videos – while still preserving an amateur quality that conveys a certain sensitivity. I suggested a system slightly different from her usual video work, but open enough so that she could adapt to it. I believe she approached our collaboration quite naturally, as part of her practice. Like many actors in her community, she wishes to promote and advocate ASMR."

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>

Date: 2017-07-21 10:52 GMT+02:00

Subject: Making Contact 5 - 10, ✨ Unboxing + tapping + whisper ✨ with Rikita ASMR (Embedded Files) by Caroline Delieutraz

To:

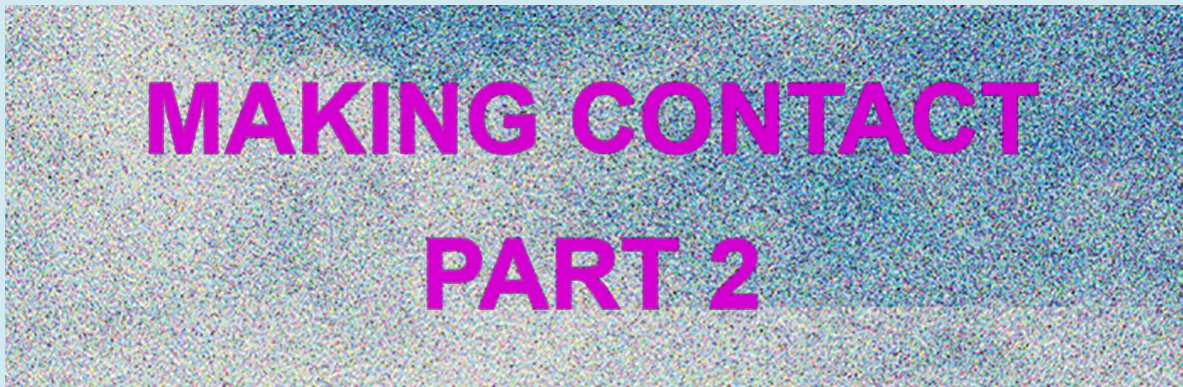
By handling Caroline Delieutraz's work, Rikita makes it sensually slide into the realm of ASMR: the Embedded Files become, like any other object in an ASMR video, a tool whose merit is judged solely on its ability to produce a relaxing sensation, as opposed to an aesthetic one. The artwork crosses over into a new field, just as everyday objects have crossed over into the art field since Duchamp's found objects, allowing them to be viewed through a different spectrum than usual.

The video is accessible on Rikita's YouTube channel under the name "ASMR Unboxing artistique - Tapping - Whispering - Ear to ear - EXPO sur Paris". Under this title it will be viewed beyond the boundaries of the art world, altering its plane of existence.



Installation view (photo : Aurélien Mole)

Caroline Delieutraz lives and works in Paris, France
www.delieutraz.net



MAKING CONTACT

PART 2

With Making Contact, we want to take a closer look at an emerging phenomena: collaboration between artists and cultural producers. The *negotiated artworks* can be considered as desired encounters of occasional allies. They are the outcome of enthusiasm that overcomes all the misunderstandings, contingencies and difficulties that come along with doing a project. Indeed a project because these artworks are not only the result of an artistic protocol, they also originated from the coordinations and constraints implied by a co-creation.

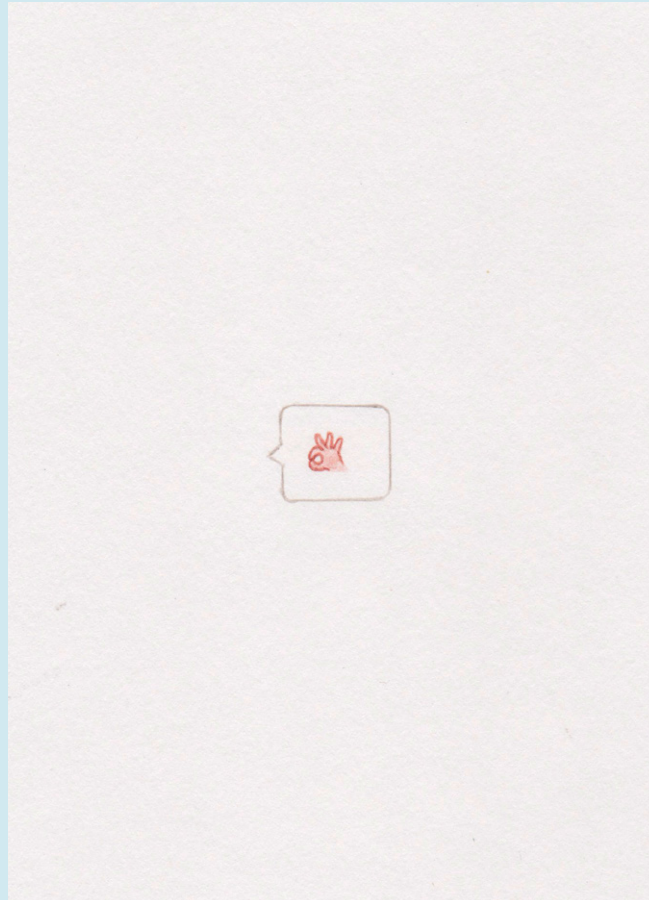
All are very different but also similar, the artworks of Arnaud Dezoteux, LA(HORDE), Reija Meriläinen and Caroline Delieutraz, show the stakes and challenges specific to online sociabilities.

These artworks tackle the communities that develop, thanks to the Internet, around cultural activities, be they traditional ones like cinema and dance or vernacular activities like ASMR or the simple fact of being online. Indeed, by being online you can be taking an active part of the Internet folklores by making GIFs and memes, sharing weird videos of random objects getting smashed or just by consuming it.

As the *negotiated artworks* stand at the intersection between two communities - one being new media art and the other, the community of the collaborator, they require a sincere commitment from the members of each community and the way they are produced is transparent. Per se, they revealed the substantial features of the two communities and underline what got the people together for the collaboration.

The *negotiated artworks* demonstrate a desire for encounters, a true curiosity for the other and, sometimes a keen desire to infiltrate another community. This search for alterity, that took in this case, this particular shape, can be seen as a need to find and redefine oneself but also the recognition and the proximity with someone else.

The *negotiated artworks* call into question the notion of visibility and of notoriety within the two worlds that they brought closer and they might have never got in contact otherwise. Referring to the collected accounts, the artist and the people they collaborate with look at their co-creation from varying perspectives, also their fame is counted, told and observable in different ways and in different locations. Thereby, to collaborate is not to confuse the points of view neither to double the number of people who watch.



Another common point draws the four artworks shown over the last week: all their narratives imply a machine or a device. It appears, somehow in a threatening way in all the videos be it an industrial machine built to crush or to carry, or a device who questions our stored memory. This conveys a call into question, the kind of relationship we experience everyday with machines and devices. Is it telling our superiority when the hand and the mind move them? A feeling of affection or a mistrust? When the people and the machine are dancing together, are we facing a relation of equality or a relation of equivalence? Anyway, it seems that machines and devices are now established in our lives as an extension of the self, a link through the other, or maybe a new alterity in itself.

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>

Date: 2017-07-24 11:06 GMT+02:00

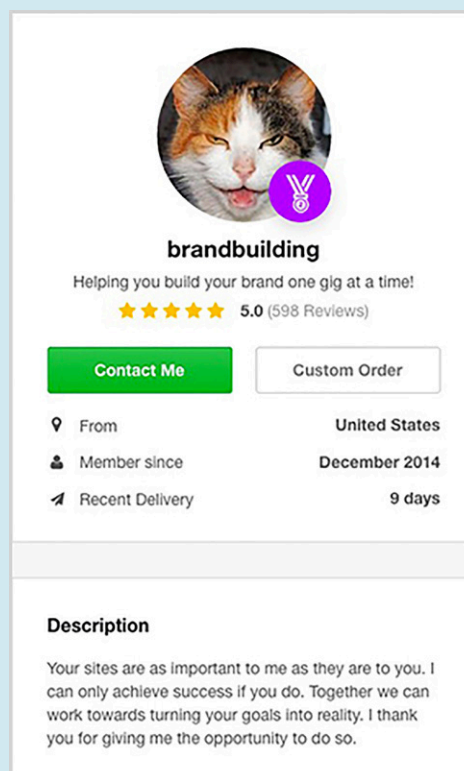
Subject: Making Contact 6 - 10, Part 2

To:

Also, the reflexions about collaborations and about our relationship to technologies declined in the negotiated artworks, leading to the second part of Making Contact, to the topic of work within the digital era. Needless to say that the Internet has delivered revolutionary changes in the way we think, produce and perceive work. Making Contact is a perfect example of this: fruits of our collaboration of 3 people in 2 countries, the exhibition is born, made and broadcast online.

Also, the reflexions about collaborations and about our relationship to technologies declined in the negotiated artworks, leading to the second part of Making Contact, to the topic of work within the digital era. Needless to say that the Internet has delivered revolutionary changes in the way we think, produce and perceive work. Making Contact is a perfect example of this: fruits of our collaboration of 3 people in 2 countries, the exhibition is born, made and broadcast online.

The artists presented in this second part explore work conditions through forms of collaboration. Paul Heintz is interested in the Chinese business of copying artworks, at the rims of the art field and offers insights into our globalized world. Marion Balac observes the uberisation of an increasing number of services and the way this phenomenon creates a new concurrency in between the amateur and professional.



Credits:

Detail de *The Factory*, Paul Heintz, 2017

Fiverr (capture d'écran), *Ruta for por España*, Marion Balac, 2015

PAUL HEINTZ

THE FACTORY

2017, installation (paintings, drawings)



Paul Heintz is a French artist who aims to reveal the narrative power hidden in various elements that compose our reality. He is particularly interested in the phenomenon of counterfeiting. While travelling in Tétouan, North Morocco, a pair of shoes caught his attention, on the label that kept the graphical identity of the genuine brand he could read GATE instead of CAT. The fact of wearing a branded item can be the expression of the desire to be aligned with the fictional process created by the brand. The fact of wearing a fake name seems to preserve and even to convoke the brand narrative identity while the real negotiation is with reality. This bridge, the GATE, has led Paul Heintz from Maghreb to China, seeking stories hidden behind the images.

Indeed, while he was doing online searches for his movie *Non contractuel* (Non-contractual in English) dealing with work and simulation, Paul Heintz discovered the existence of Dafen, a Chinese city in Shenzhen's outskirts. Dafen is known worldwide for its uncommon industry: the hand copy of paintings. These paintings are mass-produced in the city's ateliers, companies and factories.



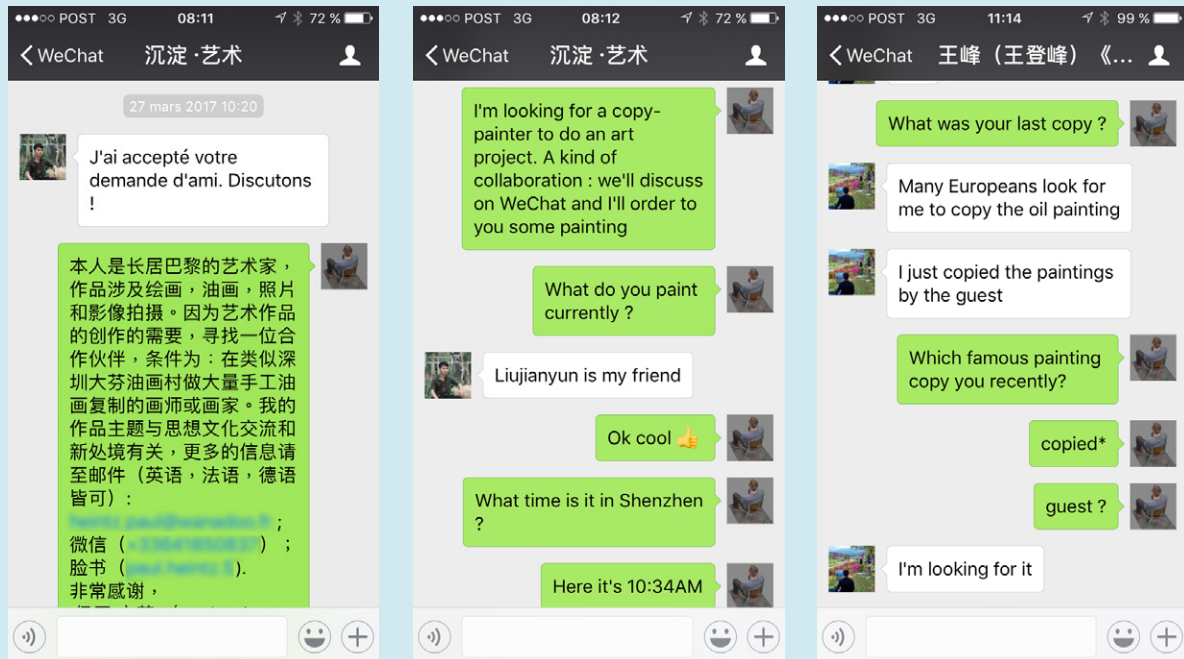
Vue d'installation, *Jet Lag / Out Of Sync*, 4e Triennale Jeune Création, Luxembourg et Grande Région

Paul Heintz: "Globalisation is not allowing any contact with the workers at the other end of the scale, for handmade copies of paintings, as for any other goods of mass consumption. So I decided to make contact with one of them, to use the mercantile system, to infiltrate it in order to transform it into an artistic exchange."

Heintz and Shiping managed to forge a relationship. Heintz created the installation *The Factory* staging their conversations and their works. This artwork call into question Heintz and Shipping's profession and in fact, that is what made them closer, that is to say, the use of the same production tools - material, medium and techniques - is also what pulled them apart. Indeed, like on an assembly line, Wang Shiping is in general painting in between ten and twenty copies of the same paintings at a time in a very methodical way. Also, his concerns are related to developing his business, it is not about art.

Paul Heintz: "Usually, Wang Shiping has no conversation with the people that place an order to replicate an image. In this precise situation, he was interested that we were talking using instant messages and by the fact that we were confronting our so divergent views on topics like work, art and globalisation. While talking he discovers snippets of my life, the way I worked and lived. Our minds were filled with clichés at the beginning of our discussions: him idealising France, me having misconceptions about working in China. Things are moving and we have learned that interpretations are multiples."

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-25 11:26 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 7 - 10, The Factory by Paul Heintz
To:



Paul Heintz, prise de contact via WeChat (captures d'écran, documentation de l'artiste)

Paul Heintz and Wang Shiping had their conversations on Wechat, an instant message application very popular in China. They were using the functionality that automatically translates English to Mandarin and reciprocally, and that sometimes produces very poetical and unfortunate mistakes.

While *The Factory* was taking shape, the two men made a step aside, a step toward the other. When Wang Shiping could, he took the time to think about the images with Paul Heintz. On his side, Paul Heintz decides to use watercolour - the techniques he thought would be easier for someone like him who is not a painter - in order to replicate some images. Thus, the artist learned how to paint like the copyist and the copyist who paints for the installation was informed of the creative process in progress.

Paul Heintz: "I was also interested in the creation of a particular work method and in the fact I didn't know what was going to come as its result. The openness to the unknown, to the randomness of our respective lifestyles... For me an artistic work is also the moment of an encounter, be it with someone or with a place, a document, a particular system or a situation..."

With the artwork, *The Factory*, the topic of the cliché, the persistent image of a preconceived idea, is also at stake. Yet it seems that, at the end, what has finally gotten the two men closer, is to confront their clichés about far-off situations and to re-negotiate their own mental images through contact with the other.

Paul Heintz lives and works in Paris, France
paulheintz.fr

MARION BALAC

RUTA POR ESPAÑA

2015, outsourced diary



[Download the PDF of
Ruta por España](#)

Marion Balac uses unusual data, situations or objects as a base to produce fictions that reveal the landscapes and horizons of a globalised world. Her artworks; tender and dark at the same time, show how stories generated by the connected and ultra-contemporary culture fall within physical or online sites.

In 2015, the artist decided to embark on a tour of Spain vicariously. She wouldn't move from the Casa de Velázquez in Madrid, where she was in residency, but she also wouldn't write this story herself, just the protocol needed for the story to emerge under somebody else's keyboard. Indeed, Marion Balac has externalised the writing of the fiction titled *Ruta por España* (Road for Spain) using Fiverr, a platform allowing everyone - amateur or professional - to offer services for as low as 5 dollars, that is to say, a fiver.

From: **KoProjects** <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-26 11:43 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 8 - 10, Ruta por España by Marion Balac
To:

She hired about twenty authors to devise her haul. Paid a fiver, each author was in charge of writing about a city, one stage of her imaginary journey, and was, provided by the artist, as an inspiration source, a postcard she found in a thrift shop in Madrid. The protocol she sent them is the following: "The hero would be me (Marion), a 31-year-old French girl that barely speaks Spanish, travelling alone. The character (me) should not get physical changes (or die) during the story in order to keep the consistency between each chapter of the book." Also, she asked the authors to give agreement to the fact that she would use the text in books, exhibitions or publications.

Dear *marionbalac*,
sbmusic left you a message in your inbox:

"Sorry, my connection to Fiverr has been so bad recently-I haven't been able to load anything from my computer, and I can't figure out why. I'm using another computer at the moment, but will bring mine in soon to diagnose the website error (writing is my thing-not internet troubleshooting!) Aside from that, few questions about your character: Is she single? Do you want her to converse with people there? Any preference on adding personal hobbies (could run into something of the sorts)? Feel free to add on any other thoughts that come to mind, and also give me an idea if you have a preference on length, but I would assume you're more interested in whatever suits the trip altogether. Sean"

The authors, coming from the USA, Canada, Australia, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mexico and the Netherlands, had, without knowing each other, contributed to building a common narration. Putting themselves into a French girl's shoes discovering Spain, they might have travelled to cities they had never been. The story, that is sometimes boring, sometimes enlightening, sometimes romantic gathers numerous clichés: local food or monument descriptions that might have been inspired by Wikipedia pages echo to the touristic images that have remained over the years.

Marion Balac: Once the protocol was settled, I just had to straighten the authors out when they weren't respecting the instructions like writing in a first person narrative. My only challenge was to play the game and to accept the result for what they were, very short, very long, sometimes pretty bad, sometimes definitively pre-written (but what can we expect for so little money?) and that was part of the experience.

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>

Date: 2017-07-26 11:43 GMT+02:00

Subject: Making Contact 8 - 10, Ruta por España by Marion Balac

To:



Thus this road-trip in Spain turns into a globalised story that tells more about the age we are living in and about the authors than about the artist. Writing in Marion Balac's name and through the mental images they convey, their style and their Fiverr's profile, they tell snippets about their own life. *Ruta por España's* unsteady construction becomes poetic when the story is re-read, having a thought for those people who contributed to writing it. The laws of the narration revealed the asymmetric collaboration between the artist, becoming an online entrepreneur and under paid service providers. With this artwork, Marion Balac highlights, with humour, the incongruities, even, the drifts of the new collaborative economy. She also makes us catch a glimpse of work and collaboration modes that artists might have to face in a near future.

Marion Balac lives and works between Paris (France) and Barcelone (Spain)

www.marionbalac.com



Focusing on collaboration between artists and cultural producers, Making Contact looked first at the notion of visibility, and its various definitions within communities, and secondly at the notion of work in a connected and globalised environment. As a conclusion to this epistolary adventure, we will call into question the way artists have positioned themselves in a society based on the instant sharing of images.

At the end of 2010, a new app allowing people to share images or videos, in a public or private way appeared. Less than a decade later, Instagram has shaken the codes of our visual world. The interface revealed a new virtual system with its own language, units of sense, value, social figures, that is to say a #newreality. Inside Instagram's square, celebrities and professions emerged. Scrolling a timeline, one can see: pictures posted by unreachable stars that remain inaccessible despite their strategies to unveil their daily routine. There are beautiful images of good times uploaded by the majority of users in order to gain little hearts, whilst there is also content sent by people who aim to share or increase their business activities through the platform.

Instagram, like the rest of the web, has turned professional: advertisers pay to slide a commercial in between two pictures of your friends on holidays, entrepreneurs comment and communicate about their projects, account admins and influencers seek to develop their followers in order to be spotted by brands for product placement purpose. Being followed means being visible and this visibility is now similar to capital. Numbers of views build notoriety and generate targeted audiences. As the economy is based on an ecology of attention, which is now tracked and improved by hidden working modes, captivating people's views is now valuable. Indeed what happens when we tag someone in a picture, when we apply a filter on our face, when we connect a hashtag? Are we contributing to increasing a database or to making the performance of a facial recognition software better?



Screenshot of the artist Gregory Chatonsky's Instagram account

Definitively we contribute to producing the partition of the visual, a field that before fell to the artists. Now artists also have to situate themselves within a system where their relationship with their work and images have to be renegotiated. Becoming entrepreneurs as well, sharing their projects and the way they progress, their ability to manage their online presence and popularity start to become relevant parameters for their careers. Understanding the logic behind the algorithms - that foster the most famous accounts - and elaborating various strategies to remain visible seem to be part of the artistic working activities.

The artwork titled [*High Retention, Slow Delivery*](#) made in 2014 by the Dutch artist Constant Dul-laart evokes precisely the way that social networks reckon profiles depending on a quantity based popularity. In order to mitigate the numerical logic and the goal of "spreading attention economy socialism". He bought large amounts of fake Instagram and Twitter followers, then he gave them to various people on these platforms. Because of the importance granted to the quantification of attention, we can wonder if in a dystopian future it would be possible, in order to define the value of an artwork, to add to criteria like origin and medium, the number of followers they had at the time.

These points raise questions about the potential impact of an artist's visibility over the value of their artwork which leads us to call into question the intrinsic value of the image representing the artwork. Indeed, within a context of amplified circulation and consumption of images, their reach is accentuated to the point where pictures of artworks seem to be as important as the artwork themselves. In a system of mass image consumption, the image of the artwork would become equivalent to the artwork.

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-27 20:22 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 9 - 10, Conclusion
To:

For the [ImageObjects](#)' series, made in between 2008 and 2015, the American artist Artie Vierkant, was pointing out this phenomenon by transforming the pictures that document his exhibitions. In doing so, he created a separation between the experience of the spectator who sees the artwork in a gallery and the experience of looking at a reproduction of the work in a magazine or online. He explained that "the documentation becomes a separate work in itself, incorporating elements of collage, techniques commonly used in professional image retouching, aestheticized digital watermarks, and more."

The exposure of the artwork online is more and more thought about during the creation process. Some artists like [Amalia Ulman](#) for example, seize and even embodied this problem. By interiorizing the constraints implied by online visibility and audience engagement, are artists becoming online professionals or even influencers? One thing to be sure about: they are still the ones to warn us about reality before it catches us.



Screenshot of Artie Vierkant's website

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-27 20:22 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 9 - 10, Conclusion
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MAKING CONTACT #10



As an epilogue, this last mail proposes, on the one hand, a list of artworks to discover the artists presented in Making Contact through other pieces, and, on the other hand, a selection of links: artworks, artists, texts and videos that have inspired us.

Arnaud Dezoteux

I'm a Hardstyle Lover, 2011

Video, 4 min 45 s

Featuring Anthony Lamarre aka The Tun3r

<https://vimeo.com/185388060>

Paul Heintz

Non contractuel, 2015

Film, 16 min

<http://paulheintz.fr/noncontractuel>

(LA)HORDE

TA DA BONE, 2017

Choregraphique piece, 1 h

www.collectiflahorde.com

Marion Balac

Feel like home, 2015

Framed photograph 50x50cm. Two A0 posters.

Collaboration avec Carlos Carbonell/Internet2

www.marionbalac.com/works/feel-like-home

Reija Meriläinen

Nonpareil process, 2016

Video, 2 min 18 s

Collaboration with Artor Jesus Inkerö

<http://reijamerilainen.com/nonpareil-process>

Caroline Delieutraz

Written in flesh, 2014

Domain name, program, found images

www.writteninflesh.net

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-27 20:22 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 9 - 10, Conclusion
To:

Sur la collaboration / les œuvres négociées / le travail en ligne

"Throughout her videos Rottenberg draws the viewer's attention to the architecture of the body and the psychological dimensions of labor and value."

Video interview, Mika Rottenberg and The Amazing Invention Factory, New York Close Up, Art21
www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5L_s52LnwQ

"I don't impose, I propose. I offer a situation. I do not explain. I let the performers be, let them take possession of the proposition, use it as they think it suits them so we can watch them trying, evolving, progressing, navigating between their individual presence and collective construction."

Annie Abrahams, "Trapped to Reveal - On webcam mediated communication and collaboration", 2011.
<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/18236/18237>

Son site : <http://bram.org>

"To negotiate is to trade, to choose a partner with whom to sign a contract at the end of discussion. In the case at hand, the photographer and his subject meet as equals (...) discussing and deciding on the content and the economy of the image. (...) The status of the result comes from a double allegiance, to the participant and to the producer. Consequently, the 'obtained' images create an initial feeling of translation, of an effective contamination of reality by art and vice versa."

Paul Ardenne, *L'image corps*, Editions du Regard, 2001

The "negotiated images" of the photograph Michel Semeniako, since 1984
www.michel-semeniako.com/images-negociees

"A series of videos about internet content moderators: the extraordinarily significant, yet elusive, individuals who determine how much breast is too much breast for Instagram, or are tasked with scrubbing photos of Osama bin Laden from search engines. New episodes are released periodically only on the Darknet."

Eva et Franco Mattes, *Dark Content*, 2015

<http://0100101110101101.org/dark-content>

From: KoProjects <info@koprojects.com>
Date: 2017-07-27 20:22 GMT+02:00
Subject: Making Contact 9 - 10, Conclusion
To:

Sur la collaboration / les œuvres négociées / le travail en ligne

"I think this time we really have been conned. Everything was so clever, that was it, so clever, that we didn't even know we were working anymore..."

Julien Previoux, *Anomalie construites*, 2011, video HD, 7 min 41 sec
www.previoux.net/html/videos/AnomaliesFr.html

"This paper presents an ethnographic case study in the cooperation between a computer programmer and an artist. It is aimed at understanding the negotiation processes associated with shared design, distributed authorship, and artwork appropriation."

Jean-Paul Fourmentraux, "Œuvrer en commun. Dilemmes de la création interdisciplinaire négociée", *Négociations* 2008/2 (n° 10), p. 25-39.
<http://www.cairn.info/revue-negociations-2008-2-page-25.htm>

"The smart mobs are convertible into human groups to outsource tasks."

Dominique Cardon, Antonio Casilli, *Qu'est-ce que le Digital Labor ?*, Bry-sur-Marne, INA, coll. "Etudes et controverses", 2015.
<https://lectures.revues.org/18835>

"Today if anyone can speak to anyone else (...) it is according to and by function of each one's creative activity. It is not that talk of creation took place – creation, to the contrary, is something very solitary but it is in the name of my creation that I have something to say to someone."

Gilles Deleuze, lecture "What is the act of creation?" 1987, la Fémis, Paris, France.
https://youtu.be/a_hifamdISs
