

# bétonsalon

Centre for art and research

## A Lure a Part Allure Apart

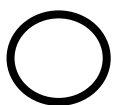
## The Otolith Group



Still from *Otolith II*, video, 2007 © The Otolith Group

From June 15 until July 23 2011

Opening on Tuesday 14 June, 6pm to 9pm



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*Revolving around the idea of knowledge-sharing across disciplines, histories and geographies, the 2011 programme has been conceived by Mélanie Bouteloup and Anna Colin, who will join the team of Bétonsalon as associate director for the year. At the core of the development of the programme is the following interrogation: If a society of the commons is an emancipated society, then how to produce self-awareness and reflection on one's own history as two essential steps to de-alienation?*

*Further reflecting on T.J. Demos's question: "What would it mean to treat the real as an effect to be produced, rather as a fact to be understood?\*", Bétonsalon presents different practices invested in the construction of memory, of realities and of potentialities, whether through the use of documents and speech, or through resorting to methodologies borrowed from diverse disciplines.*

*\* T.J. Demos in *The Otolith Group* (ed.), A Long Time Between Suns, New York/Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009.*

Mélanie Bouteloup and Anna Colin

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# EXHIBITION'S PRESENTATION

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Bétonsalon presents the first solo exhibition in France by The Otolith Group, the London-based artist collective founded by Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar. Concerned with exploring the legacies and potentialities of the essay film, cosmopolitan modernisms, speculative futures and science-fictions, The Otolith Group has developed a multifaceted practice that integrates video and film making, exhibition curation, publication and the elaboration of public platforms.

At the core of the exhibition is *The Otolith Trilogy*, consisting of *Otolith I* (2003), *Otolith II* (2007) and *Otolith III* (2009), each of which considers the potential of specific political and cultural moments to evoke alternative futures. Projected according to a set schedule, these essay-films alternate with assemblages that revisit The Otolith Group's lecture performance *Communists Like Us* (2006), their audio-essay *The Secret King in the Empire of Thinking* (2011) and the work of Marvel comics artist Jack Kirby and artist Vidya Sagar, both of which informed the methodologies of The Otolith Trilogy.

These assemblages, designed specially for Bétonsalon, constitute a near-subliminal exhibition that appears and disappears within the scheduled screenings. The folding of a temporary display inside a scenographic proposition opens up new passageways through The Otolith Group's constellation of allusions and references. As an experiment with the conditions of making methods visible and audible, *A Lure a Part Allure Apart* embraces and extends The Group's preoccupation with the disjunctions of temporality and the science-fictions of the alternative present.

## THE OTOLITH TRILOGY

### Projections' schedule:

*Otolith I*: 11h00, 13h40, 16h20

*Otolith II*: 11h30, 14h10, 16h50

*Otolith III*: 12h40, 15h20, 18h00

*Otolith I* is set in the 22nd Century, when humans are no longer able to survive on earth and live in permanent microgravity onboard the International Space Station (ISS). *Otolith I* is narrated by exoanthropologist Dr. Usha Adebaran Sagar, the future descendent of Anjalika Sagar; Adebaran Sagar's reconstructs life as it was on earth through her research into the archives of dead media. Staging an encounter between the anger and depression of the 2003 protests against the Coalition of the Willing's invasion of Iraq and the real-life meeting in Moscow, 1973 between cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman to orbit the Earth in 1963 and Anasuya Gyan-Chand, President of the National Federation of Indian Women, *Otolith I* evokes the non-metaphorical weightlessness of alien intimacy.

Again narrated by Dr. Adebaran Sagar, *Otolith II* descends from the agravic environment of the ISS to compare the hypergravic compression of Dharavari, Mumbai's megaslum with the mid-century planned urbanism of Chandigarh. *Otolith II* explores the pressures endured by citizens inhabiting these contrasting and competing versions of the city of tomorrow. Contemporary moments from lives lived in the shadow of Le Corbusier's megastructural complex are juxtaposed with scenes of immaterial labour on the sets of Film City in Mumbai and sweatshop in Dharavi. *Otolith II* surveys and resurrects the transtemporal fragments of post-Independence modernism via future-invocative alliances between socialist feminism, Nehruvian secular projects and transnational solidarity in order to assemble a present-day zodiac of the possible.

*Otolith III* inhabits the unrealised potentialities of Satyajit Ray's screenplay for *The Alien*, a film that was never made. Written in 1967, *The Alien* would have been the first science-fiction film to be set in contemporary India. *Otolith III* returns to 1967 to propose an alternative trajectory in which the fictional protagonists of *The Alien* confront Ray and attempt to seize the means of production in order to redeem their unfinished status. Reconfiguring visual and aural sequences from fourteen Ray's films; drawing upon Marvel comic artist Jack Kirby's visualisations for the unrealised screenplay of Roger Zelazny's novel *Lord of Light* (1967);

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and informed by the methodology of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Appunti per un film sull' India* (1968), *Otolith III* coalesces into a 'premake' (an expression borrowed from Chris Marker designating a remake that is completed before the original) of Ray's film.

Scheduled to appear after the projection of *Otolith I*, the first in a series of three assemblages designed for *A Lure a Part Allure Apart* revisits The Otolith Group's *Communists Like Us* (2006). Conceived as notes towards *Otolith II*, *Communists Like Us* arranges a dialogue between Soviet and Maoist delegation photographs of socialist internationalism, the subtitled conversation between activist and philosopher Francis Jeanson and Véronique, his Maoist student, played by Anna Wiazemsky in *La Chinoise* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967) and compositions by Cornelius Cardew and Ennio Moricone.

In the first assemblage, a sound montage isolated from a sequence of *Otolith II* that compares wallet-making labour with work on an advertisement for financial services, is brought into relation with subtitles drawn from the dialogue for *La Chinoise*. Acting as an alternative foreword to *Otolith II*, this scriptoaural assemblage invites an encounter between the temporalities of communist projections and the precarities of contemporary industrial and immaterial labour.

The second assemblage, which begins after the conclusion of *Otolith II*, is the audio-essay *The Secret King in the Empire of Thinking* (2011). Narrated by Anjalika Sagar, the essay is a redescription, set in an undated future, of Jack Kirby's 1978 visualisations, commissioned for the unrealised film *Lord of Light*, which was based on Roger Zelazny's 1967 science-fiction novel *Lord of Light*. Made two years after the release of *Otolith III*, in which Kirby's science-fictional illustrations played a substantial role, *The Secret King in the Empire of Thinking* indicates The Group's propensity to revisit their constellation of references so as to invoke the times and spaces of the revenant.

*The Secret King in the Empire of Thinking* anticipates the third assemblage and proposes the final fold in the spatiotemporality of the exhibition. Appearing after the conclusion of *Otolith III*, a projection announces a commission by The Institute For The Extraterrestrial Cultures in 2014, entitled *Protocol Division, Biohazard Facility For Visitation Sector 7, Quadrant 6, Naxalbari, Bengal*. This institutional fiction has travelled outside its initial appearance in *Otolith III* in order to provide a frame for the installation of works by Jack Kirby and Vidya Sagar emerge, for the time of this assemblage, in two designated areas within the space of Bétonsalon. Sagar's seven pastels and Kirby's ten photographic prints are co-related with a series of projected numbers, imaginary titles and prospective dates, all of which operate to locate Sagar and Kirby's works within the fictions of the exhibition. By linking delayed memories with anticipated presences and reordering scripts and sounds with images and voices, the scenography of *A Lure A Part Allure Apart* reveals itself to be the infernal cycle of an involuted universe.

# VISUALS

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Stills from *Otolith I*, 2003  
Video (colour, sound) 22min 16sec, UK  
© The Otolith Group

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Still from *Otolith II*, 2007  
HD video (colour, sound) 47min 42 sec UK / India  
© The Otolith Group

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[presse@betonsalon.net](mailto:presse@betonsalon.net)

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# VISUALS

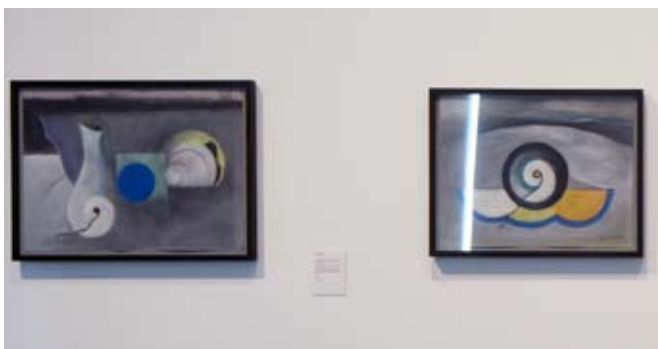
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Stills from *Otolith III*, 2009  
HD video (colour, sound) 48min UK  
© The Otolith Group



Jack Kirby, detail of 4 photographic prints,  
archival quality photographic paper, limited  
edition, 9 in a serie of 12, exhibition view  
"Thoughtform" at MACBA, Barcelona, 2011



Vidya Sagar, two pastels, exhibition view  
"Thoughtform" at MACBA, Barcelona, 2011

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# EXHIBITION'S EVENT

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Thursday 16 June, 7 – 10pm

They aim at the invisible, our former bliss

Etel Adnan, *Jenin*, poem, 2004

The Otolith Group, *Nervus Rerum*, 2008, film, 32 min

Juliano Mer-Khamis and Danniell Danniell, *Arna's Children*, documentary, 2004, 84 min

On April 4th 2011, Juliano Mer-Khamis, an actor, director and political activist of Jewish and Christian Arab parentage who was also Artistic Director of The Freedom Theatre in Jenin Refugee Camp, was assassinated by a masked gunman believed to be a Palestinian militant. Conceived as a homage to Juliano Mer-Khamis, artistic, this evening proposes an oblique mode of thought on the condition of occupation in the West Bank. The evening begins with the reading of the poem *Jenin* by author and poet Etel Adnan is followed by screenings of *Nervus Rerum*, made by The Otolith Group in Jenin in 2008 and of the award winning documentary *Arna's Children*, filmed in 2002 after the Israeli invasion, during the second Intifada. In *Arna's Children*, Juliano Mer-Khamis travels to Jenin Refugee Camp to discover the fate of children that participated in the theatre project initiated in Jenin by his mother, the dramatist Arna Mer. The evening concludes with a discussion between Etel Adnan, Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar of The Otolith Group, and the film maker and writer Eyal Sivan.

Friday 17 and Saturday 18 June, 9.30am – 7.30pm

The path to revolt: cinema, images and revolutions in the 1960s and 1970s

At musée du quai Branly

Taking the form of presentations, screenings and debates, these two complementary days – the first conceived around the special issue of the journal *Third Text* dedicated to the cine-geography of the militant image, edited by Kodwo Eshun and Ros Gray, and the second developed by Teresa Castro around the revolutionary cinema of lusophone Africa – explore the affiliations and afterlives of cinemas of liberation movements.

Participants: Mathieu K. Abonnenc, Nicole Brenez, Jonathan Buchsbaum, Teresa Castro, José Filipe Costa, Margaret Dickinson, Kodwo Eshun, Elisabete Fernandes, Olivier Hadouchi, Ros Gray, François Lecointe, Sarah Maldoror, Lúcia Ramos Monteiro, Raquel Schefer, Catarina Simão and Cédric Vincent.

The path to revolt is inscribed in the context of *Under the free sky of history*, a monthly seminar at musée du quai Branly, that investigates modes of conceiving and writing of history.

Friday 1 July, 7 – 10pm

UIQ - A Space Oddity

A lecture performance by Silvia Maglioni & Graeme Thomson followed by a discussion with Isabelle Mangou, Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun of The Otolith Group, and Dork Zabunyan (tbc).

Following the publication in 1980 of *Mille Plateaux*, Félix Guattari began work on *Un amour d'UIQ*, a film script for a science fiction movie. Initially developed in collaboration with filmmaker Robert Kramer, the script of UIQ (Universe Infra-Quark) was to occupy Guattari on and off for the next seven years, although the film was finally never made.

In this audiovisual essay, artists and filmmakers Silvia Maglioni & Graeme Thomson consider the evolution of the UIQ script amid a general resurgence of interest in science fiction in the late 1970s and early 1980s. \_ By placing echoes of the unfilmed script in relation to a montage of scenes from sci-fi films of the period, Maglioni & Thomson aim to isolate the singularity of UIQ in the virtual dimension of what it might have been and what it may yet become.

Saturday 2 July, 2 – 6pm

Communism's Afterlives

A seminar proposed by Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez and Elena Sorokina, with Catherine David, Ahmad Ghossein, Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun of The Otolith Group, Georg Schöllhammer and Mila Turajlic of Cinema Comunisto.

Through a series of dialogues, the seminar traces different generational engagements with the afterlives of communism and its (un)expected turning points in recent philosophical and artistic thought. From the perspective of the present in which communism has re-emerged as a topic of investigation in artistic and exhibition production, the seminar addresses the relevance of the term and invites comparisons with the present times.

# BIOGRAPHY

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Taking its name from part of the inner ear which establishes our sense of gravity and orientation, *The Otolith Group* is an artist collective founded by Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun in 2002.

Nationally and internationally, the Group have curated and co-curated work at film festivals, programmes and exhibitions including the exhibition *The Ghosts of Songs: A Retrospective of The Black Audio Film Collective 1982-1998* (2007) and Harun Farocki. *22 Films: 1968-2009* at Tate Modern (2009). In 2010 *The Otolith Group* were nominated for the Turner Prize. Their solo exhibitions include *A Long Time Between Suns Part 1 and 2* at Gasworks and *The Showroom* (2009) and *Thoughtform* at Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (2011).

## Recent exhibitions

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2011

Sept 17 – Dec 4: *THE BRITISH ART SHOW 7*, Group Show, Plymouth  
Sept 15 – Feb/March 2012: *THOUGHTFORM*, MAXXI, Rome  
Sept 15 – Dec 31: 11TH BIENNALE DE LYON  
July 16 – October 2: *JEAN GENET*, Nottingham Contemporary  
June 14 – July 23: *A Lure a Part Allure Apart*, Betonsalon, Paris  
May 27 – Aug 21 *THE BRITISH ART SHOW 7*, Group Show, Glasgow  
May 03 – June 19: *HYDRA DECAPITA*, *HYDRARCHY*, CIC Cairo  
April 14 – May 31: *VIDEONALE 13*, Group exhibition at Kunstmuseum Bonn  
Feb 16 – April 17: *THE BRITISH ART SHOW 7*, Group Show, Hayward Gallery London  
Feb 4 – May 29: *THOUGHTFORM*, MACBA, Barcelona

2010

Dec: *IN THE YEAR 2130*, Solo Tour of India, Mumbai / Delhi / Kolkatta  
Oct 23 – Jan 09 2011: *THE BRITISH ART SHOW 7*, Group Show, touring across the UK: Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham  
Oct 01 – Jan 14: *THE TURNER PRIZE*, Tate Britain, London  
Oct 02 – Jan 09: *MANIFESTA 8: THE EUROPEAN BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART*, Murcia, Spain  
Sept 21 – Dec 12: *29TH SAO PAULO BIENNIAL*: São Paulo, Brazil  
June 12 – August 1: *THE 11TH HOUR*, Group Show, Tang Contemporary, Beijing, China  
May 21 – July 25: *BUCHAREST BIENNIAL 4*, Bucharest, Romania  
Feb 12 – April 18: *STAR CITY: THE FUTURE UNDER COMMUNISM*, Group Show, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham

2009

Sept 6 – Oct 24: *PART II, A LONG TIME BETWEEN SUNS*. Solo Show, The Showroom, London [Cat]  
Jul 31 – Aug 31: *COMPENDIUM*, Group Show, Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin, Ireland  
June 17 – July 31: *ANOMALIES: FROM NATURE TO THE FUTURE*, Group Show at Rossi and Rossi Gallery, London  
June 11 – Aug 31: *UNIVERSAL CODE*, Group Show, Power Plant, Toronto, Canada

## Recent conferences, workshops and curatorial projects

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2011

May 20: *HYDRARCHY*, conference, MACBA, Barcelona, Spain  
March 19: *Hydra Decapita*, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit

2010

Nov: *GEOGRAPHIES OF MILITANT CINEMA* curatorial partnership with Third Text & INIVA  
Jul 29: *OTOLITH III* Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA), Glasgow, UK  
Jun: *GEOGRAPHIES OF MILITANT CINEMA*, Betonsalon, Paris,  
Jun 6: *OTOLITH II*, as part of They Do Things Differently There, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, UK  
Apr 30: *COMMUNISTS LIKE US*, Beirut, Lebanon.  
Apr 29: *KRIEGSPIEL 2.0: THE IMMERSIVE IMAGE*, Talk by Kodwo Eshun and Steve Goodman at Home Works V, Beirut, Lebanon  
Apr 1: *OTOLITH II*, Metz School of Fine Arts, France  
March 28 – April 1: *CINEMA CLASH CONTINUUM*, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, NL  
Mar 25: *OTOLITH II*, Goloss, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Feb 3: *THE IMAGE IN QUESTION: DISCUSSION WITH JACQUES RANCIERE* Kodwo Eshun in conversation with Rancière about his new book *The Emancipated Spectator* at the ICA, London.  
March 16, 17, 18: *GLOBE*. For Frankfurt and the World, Deutsche Bank Towers



# ABOUT BETONSALON

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Bétonsalon is a non-profit organisation that runs a centre for art and research located within a university, in the heart of a neighborhood currently undergoing reconstruction. This neighborhood, ZAC Paris Rive Gauche, is located on the north-eastern part of the 13th arrondissement of Paris, very close to the river Seine and to the town of Ivry-sur-Seine.

In this context planned as a model of contemporary urbanism, Bétonsalon wishes to create a space for reflection, anchored in a district, a university and society at large, through developing close links with students, teachers, locals, associations and schools.

Designed as a place for production and research, Bétonsalon experiments with various formats to produce, publish and distribute art, working with actors from various disciplines (artists, philosophers, playwrights, choreographers, scientists, architects, etc.) to develop their practice on processual, collaborative and discursive levels.

Projects take multiple forms and develop on different time scales, including workshops, lectures, publications, exhibitions, neighbourhood tours, festivals, performances or interventions in the public space.



# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## TEAM

Mélanie Bouteloup, director  
Anna Colin, associate director  
Flora Katz, exterior relations  
Agnès Noël, education projects  
Bertrand Riou, intern

## ADMINISTRATION

Cyril Dietrich, artist and président de Bétonsalon  
Bernard Blistène, director of cultural development at Centre Pompidou  
Paolo Codeluppi, photographer  
Marie Cozette, director of centre d'art La Synagogue de Delme  
Laurent Le Bon, director of Centre Pompidou-Metz  
Marc Maier, teacher and researcher at Université Paris Diderot – Paris 7



## BÉTONSALON

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Opening hours: from Tuesday to Saturday  
from 11 am to 7 pm,

FREE ENTRY

Access : Métro line 14 ou RER ligne C  
stop Bibliothèque François Mitterrand

# OUR PARTNERS

Bétonsalon is supported by the City of Paris, the Department of Paris, the Université Paris - Diderot, the Île-de-France Regional Board of Cultural Affairs – Ministry of Culture and Communication, Conseil régional d'Île-de-France, Hiscox and Leroy Merlin (quai d'Ivry)



Bétonsalon is member of the TRAM connection, contemporary art network in Paris, Ile-de-France



Media partners



Supported by Fluxus, a Franco-British Fund for Contemporary Art



In partnership with:



The event *Communism's afterlives* is supported by OCA - Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo



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