

WE ARE THE TIME
Gerrit Rietveld Academie

In the academic year 2011-2012 Studium Generale Rietveld Academie presents a lecture-series, seminars and a week-long conference festival, all under the umbrella of :

WE ARE THE TIME

Art Lives in the Age of Global Transition

Drawing inspiration from *The Role of a Lifetime* (2003), a work by artist and filmmaker Deimantas Narkevičius, WE ARE THE TIME will explore the role of lifetime and life experience as a crucial source of ideas and inspirations, as a force that shapes ones' art practice. Life experience is always generated as the intersection between the personal rhythm of one's life and the larger societal perspective. How do we position ourselves in time? What are the decisive moments in our personal lives? What is our relation to the historical moment or context? How do we weave them into our life-narratives? The reflection on historical moments and situations together with one's personal experience converge into a generative force that searches form in a work of art, an image, a gesture or informs one's entire practice. The work of art becomes thinking history out loud.

From Tahrir Square to Occupy Wall Street – we are witnessing a worldwide desire for transition, but its direction is still open. This momentum belongs to the youngest generation of artists who will contribute to it with their work and shape it with the way they form fleeting communities. Can we imagine our lives and our work after twenty years?

With the advent of digital technologies and new regimes of representation, the rapid changes in our media-environment suggest very different ways of relating to the materiality of images and to their authenticity. The network condition we live in,

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offers unprecedented possibilities to have simultaneous and multiple perspectives on events with social and historical significance. This implies a very different mode of historicizing, of writing down our memories. It is in this vortex of eventfulness we have to find ourselves again.

Studium Generale Rietveld Academie is an extensive trans-disciplinary program that brings together students from all departments of the Rietveld Academy and the Sandberg Institute around shared questions and topics. It regularly opens up to broader audiences. The energetic input of numerous organizations and individuals in - and outside the academy contributes to its organic lay-out.

Studium Generale Rietveld Academie wants to articulate how art and design are linked with other domains (from the personal to the political, from the vernacular to the academic), how our 'now' is linked with past and future, our 'here' with 'elsewhere'.

In the belief that art and design students can only learn to think independently when knowledge, imagination and reflection combine to work together in an unorthodox and critical way, *Studium Generale Rietveld Academie* embarks every year on slightly unruly and therefore always exciting research trajectories. Annually selected curators and numerous guest lecturers from all over the world propose a wide variety of entry points to contemporary discourse.

www.studiumgenerale.rietveldacademie.nl

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I told you so

Curated and introduced by Alfredo Cramerotti

What is the relationship between gossip and the history books? Or between a shopping list and the future of industry in the digital age? Or between a general election and eternity? It is difficult to pinpoint how our everyday dramas relate to the bigger story, but since humanity is indeed made up of humans, there must surely be a way of describing a particular time to include all those present.

Just as we place ourselves in relation to the universe by way of concentric rings of space – from home to neighbourhood, to town, to district, to country, to continent to planet, to solar system, to galaxy – time too is made up of nested zones: today, last year, this decade, the last generation, next century, the ice age, the space-age future. The four participants I have invited to speak at *I told you so*, Cathy Haynes, Sally O'Reilly, Tai Shani and Fay Nicolson, address this relationship between near and far from diverse perspectives. Haynes explores the improbabilities of temporal cartography; O'Reilly demonstrates the alien nature of historical speeches; Shani presents 'registers' of representation and an over-identifying actress; and Nicolson digs up un-archived legacies of art education. But while these approaches are wildly different, there is a point at which they meet: each considers how we create or interpret documents which appear to straddle temporal strata, to speak to the future and past as well as the present.

Each speaker assembles, re-appropriates or re-enacts recorded information, and uses narrative as a vehicle to drive it toward new destinations. The tone might be media-savvy, fantastical, literary or academic, but the result invariably shimmers between experience and fancy, the rational and the ridiculous, sentimentality and satire. The resulting hiccups in logic can reveal or re-arrange systems and structures that we might have forgotten are there. Social structures that condition our

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behaviour or cultural systems that influence our understanding of past, present and future become increasingly apparent as each speaker demonstrates how a diagram, public announcement or institution can be subjectively explored and how finite conclusions can be exploded once and for all.

Alfredo Cramerotti is a writer, curator and artist working across a variety of media such as TV, radio, publishing, internet, media festivals, photography, writing and exhibition curating. He directs Mostyn, Wales' leading contemporary art centre, co-directs AGM Culture and CPS Chamber of Public Secrets, is Research Scholar at the European Centre for Photography Research, University of Wales, Newport, and Editor of the *Critical Photography* book series by Intellect Books. His own publications include the book *Aesthetic Journalism: How to inform without informing* (2009) and *Unmapping the City: Perspectives of Flatness* (2010).

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