

# *Co-Workers*

## *Beyond Disaster*

**October 8, 2015 – January 30, 2016**

Press opening: Wednesday October 7, 2015 - 5 to 6 pm

Opening: Wednesday October 7, 2015 - 6 to 9 pm

*After at Petit Bain starting from 9:30 pm*

**Antoine Catala; Ian Cheng; Melissa Dubbin, Aaron S. Davidson & Violaine Sautter; Vilém Flusser & Louis Bec; Jasmina Metwaly & Philip Rizk; David Ohle; Agnieszka Piksa & Vladimir Palibrk; Pamela Rosenkranz; Daniel Steegmann Mangrané; Wu Tsang; Nobuko Tsuchiya; Haytham el-Wardany**

Curated by Mélanie Bouteloup and Garance Malivel

*Co-Workers* unfolds over two different chapters: *The Network as Artist* at Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, and *Beyond Disaster* at Bétonsalon - Centre for Art and Research.



Image: *God Mode*, Ultragramme, 2015

***Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster* puts forth the speculative powers of story-telling and science-fiction to re-think the ways we inhabit our environment.**

*Cloudy, freezing in the outskirts, cold tonight, colder tomorrow, warming Thursday and Friday, cooling off by Saturday, sleet by Sunday, double suns on Monday, and so on, according to the everyday charts, indicating a possible trend—warm, cool, cooler, etcetera, chance of light-to-heavy blister snow, probable drizzle washing out the artificial month, gas breaks at Amarillo, Great Chicago, and Texaco City, no moons tonight, shelter animals if necessary, please stay tuned...*

Flows of information, words, data, dematerialized transactions, precipitations, and tidal waves. Alarming observations of freak weather. Which today, the stock market or the weather report, influences the course of things? Loss of legibility, failed predictions, non-linear logics.

In his essay “Infinite Game of Thrones”, the artist Ian Cheng examines the cognitive evolution of individuals faced with a changing environment, with rules endlessly repeated and redefined:

1. Ian Cheng, “Infinite Game of Thrones,” originally published in *The Machine Stops*, ed. Erik Wyszocan (New York: Halmos, 2015). “Perhaps the most intimate crisis we face today is the limits of human consciousness to really grasp non-human scaled complexity. What is non-human scaled complexity? Strangelove. Y2K. The sprawling codebase of Microsoft Windows. The Amazon rainforest. Climate change. Big data. Antiterrorism. Cancer. The unknown unknownness of an expanding universe. A dynamic something composed of such vast interconnectivity and such deep causal chains that it cannot be metabolized by humans as a comprehensible whole. Too much to hold in the head. Impervious to narrativization.”<sup>1</sup>

*Roving chuff clouds, floxiness hovering above L.A. unpredictable, nothing verified, minimum forecast, probable extensive sunsout, birdfall index high per hundredcount, earlier reports not reliable, premature, lofty hopes for a sunsy weekout, otherwise rain and sleet.*

The world that we have built appears today to be dominated by an increasing ambivalence: that of an ever more complex interconnectedness that allows both new modes of exchange to emerge and practices and knowledge to circulate – yet, in an age of mass technological and industrial production, it does so with an alarming loss of legibility, and an increase in the threats to human and ecological survival. At the moment when the news media is focused on the twenty-first United Nations Climate Change Conference in Le Bourget, following two decades of attempts to negotiate international commitments to climate change, *Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster* seeks to examine the ways in which we interact with our environment from a variety of disciplinary vantage points that take into account different economic, cultural, and social influences. Indeed, the distinction, as it still too often prevails, should be avoided between issues relegated to the “environmental” realm (pollution, global warming, preservation of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, etc.) and others to the “social” realm (migration, employment, racial, sexual and wealth inequality, public health, violence, etc.), in order to seek viable responses to the various upheavals with which we are currently confronted.

*Seven oval spheres in Scorpio according to the charts, probable deadly Friday, chance of a two-Tuesday mock week, brackish drizzles in the midlands, lozenges melting in the drugstores.*

Echoing the metaphor put forward by the writer Haytham el-Wardany in his essay “Notes on Disaster”<sup>2</sup>, the exhibition *Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster* seeks to examine, not the tragic dimension that inheres in a state of disaster, but rather the transformations and forms of collective action that disaster occasions. This raises the question of emancipation and re-empowerment, in the sense that disaster, as

3. See the essay by Giovanna di Chiro, “Living Environmentalisms: Coalition Politics, Social Reproduction, and Environmental Justice”, originally published in *Environmental Politics*, 17:2, 276-298, Routledge, 2008. Di Chiro calls for a “living environmentalism” in which citizens can combine forces in order to preserve or regenerate the ecosystems that influence the reproductive processes on which all communities depend.

el-Wardany argues, “is a communal event, in which stricken individuals band together in a stricken group and search for a new beginning. And in this way, it is also a political event, for disaster is a collective fumbling towards a new reality in which the individual might finally return to himself.” In other words, how to transform a critical situation into a ferment of renewal that gives itself to thought, both individually and collectively?<sup>3</sup>

2. Haytham el-Wardany, “Notes on Disaster,” originally published in the online magazine *ArteEast Quarterly* (Winter 2015). Translate from the Arabic by Robin Moger.

*Government relaxes moon control. Moons behave erratically. You are urged to stay indoors.*

*Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster* proposes an alternative perspective, a change of outlook based on the speculative power of storytelling and science fiction, as a means to rethink the ways we inhabit our environment. Bringing together a dozen works, for the most part resulting from collaborative processes, the exhibition will also hold a regular series of talks and public events. Artists, researchers, and activists from different fields have been invited to participate in various workshops and meetings, notably with students from the École Nationale Supérieure d’Arts de Paris Cergy and the Université Paris Diderot. Shifting the focus away from an anthropocentric viewpoint, the different approaches and works brought together in the exhibition allow for a renewed awareness of other forms of life, communication and interaction. *Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster* has been conceived as a space dedicated to exploring new forms of languages and syntax – with the wager that future possibilities to live and cohabit will depend on the attention we pay to multiple modes of expression and awareness.

*Two suns cooling at the horizon, restless moons, animals should be sheltered, travelers are warned, all craft should return to port, possible flood on The Jelly, toxic snakes in the treetops, the wind alive again, temperatures will...*

David Ohle, weather reports from the novel *Motorman* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1972).

# ABOUT BÉTONSALON

Bétonsalon - Centre for Art and Research strives to develop a space of reflection and confrontation at the confluence of art and university research by giving form to discourses from the realms of the aesthetic, cultural, political, social and economic. Integrated into the site of the University Paris 7 at the heart of a neighbourhood undergoing reconstruction, the ZAC Paris Rive Gauche in the 13th district of Paris, Bétonsalon aims to ally theory and practice, with the objective of rearticulating the position of research and artistic creation in society.



# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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**Mélanie Bouteloup**, director  
**Mélanie Mermod**, executive director for administration and fundraising  
**Virginie Bobin**, associate curator, head of public programs  
**Garance Malivel**, associate curator  
**Barbara Cueto**, curatorial fellow  
**Julie Esmaeeli Pour**, education assistant  
**Simon Rannou**, administrative assistant  
**Damien Gueners**, robotic assistant

## CONTACT

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Bus 62, 89 et 132 stop Bibliothèque François Mitterrand  
Bus 64 stop Tolbiac-Bibliothèque François Mitterrand  
Bus 325 stop Thomas Mann  
Tramway T3a stop Avenue de France

## FREE ENTRANCE

Open Tuesday - Saturday / 11am-7pm

# PARTNERS

*Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster* is supported by the Région Île-de-France, Arcadi Île-de-France in the frame of Nêmo, International Biennial of Digital Arts – Paris / Île-de-France, as well as by Imago Mundi Foundation (Cracow, Poland) within the programme *Place Called Space* (project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the Malopolska Regional Operational Programme for 2007-2013). *Co-Workers: Beyond Disaster* is also supported by the program UDPN - Usages des patrimoines numérisés (I dex SPC).



Bétonsalon - Centre for Art and Research is supported by the City of Paris, the Department of Paris, the Paris Diderot University, the Île-de-France Regional Board of Cultural Affairs - Ministry of Culture and communication, Île-de-France Regional Council and Leroy Merlin (Ivry).

Bétonsalon - Centre for Art and Research is a member of tram, réseau art contemporain Paris / Île-de-France, and of d.c.a / the French association for the development of centres d'art.



d.c.a

Event and media partners:



# PRESS CONTACT

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## Co-Workers

### Network as Artist

9 October 2015 – 31 January 2016

**Press preview:** Thursday 8 October 2015 11 am – 2 pm

**Opening:** Thursday 8 October 2015 6–9 pm

The Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris is presenting at ARC, its experimental space, *CO-WORKERS – Network as Artist*: a selection of international artists trained during the 2000s whose innovative practices are largely based on networking. Mounted by the New York collective DIS, the exhibition foregrounds a new artistic language taking its inspiration from Internet resources. The Musée d'Art Moderne has opted for dividing *CO-WORKERS* between two sites, each with its own emphasis: *Network as Artist* at ARC and *Beyond Disaster* at Bétonsalon – Centre for Artistic Research.

With the world in the throes of the third industrial revolution, the use of the Internet and mobile telephone systems has triggered a new mode of communication hinging on an uninterrupted flow of information. While remaining independent, the user is connected to numerous networks – professional, technical, artistic, cultural, etc. – that recognise no geographic boundaries: a form of organisation symptomatic of what sociologist Barry Wellman calls "networked individualism".

"The Internet of Things" revolves around the idea that humans are no longer the sole thinking entities – that the things around them constitute an environment termed "ambient intelligence".

Installations, videos, sculptures and paintings: the contributing artists explore a system of exchanges whose complexity outstrips the merely human scale. They investigate the way intelligence and consciousness can be extended to include machines, animals and other living organisms.

In a society marked by data acceleration and the omnipresence of images, these artists work within a culture of the visible, in which the boundaries between the private and public spheres are blurred and intimacy becomes "extimacy".

In devising the exhibition's scenography DIS, known for its lifestyle platform Dis Magazine, has drawn on collective work spaces, shopping malls, and airport transit areas. The upshot is an event – a network of artworks, interactive installations and performances – that situates the museum in a world of data streaming and circulation.



DIS, *The New Art Handlers*, 2013  
Artwork selected by Bjarne Melgaard with David Rimanel, Courtesy of DIS Magazine

**Museum Director**  
Fabrice Hergott

**Exhibition curators**  
Angeline Scherf  
Toke Lykkeberg  
Jessica Castex

**Scenography**  
DIS

**Visitor information**  
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris  
11 Avenue du Président Wilson  
75116 Paris  
Tel. 01 53 67 40 00  
[www.mam.paris.fr](http://www.mam.paris.fr)

Open Tuesday – Sunday  
10 am – 6 pm  
Late opening: Thursdays until 10 pm

**Admission**  
**Full rate:** 7 €  
**Concessions:** 5 €

**Catalogue** published by Paris Musées

**Cultural activities**  
Information and bookings  
Tel. 01 53 67 40 80

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The exhibition themes will be the subject of talks and encounters integrated into The Island (KEN), a hybrid kitchen/bathroom space specially designed by DIS and coproduced with the New Museum in New York.

Guest artists include Aids-3D, Ed Atkins, Trisha Baga, Ian Cheng, Douglas Coupland, DIS, David Douard, Cécile B. Evans, GCC, Parker Ito, Mark Leckey, Clémence de La Tour du Pin, Shawn Maximo, Nøne Futbol Club, Aude Pariset, Rachel Rose, Hito Steyerl, Ryan Trecartin and 89plus.

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