

Double Agent

14 February

– 6 April 2008

Institute of
Contemporary
Arts



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City of Westminster


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ICA Education Programme

Our dynamic, artist-led Education Programme provides opportunities for schools, families and community groups to engage in creative ways with the ICA's exhibitions. The gallery is open for school visits between 12 and 1pm, Monday—Friday.

This pack is geared towards secondary school students pursuing Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers may find it useful to visit the exhibitions before bringing a group. If you would like to plan a trip to the ICA, get in touch and find out how we can meet the needs of your group.

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For more information and to view our archive of previous learning activities, please visit www.ica.org.uk/education

What We Do

Artist Led Projects: Our programme includes artist-led workshops with schools and innovative collaborations between artists and community groups.

Teachers Packs: These are available with each exhibition and include exhibition notes, suggested discussion points and activities for your visit, how to prepare before attending the exhibition and proposed activities for the classroom.

Insets: The ICA offers professional development sessions for teachers as an opportunity to meet with artists and gallery staff, and discuss how to incorporate contemporary art into young people's education.

Schools Mailing List: Keep up to date with the exciting education projects, events and workshops happening at the ICA by signing up for our mailing list.

Educators' Openings: These private views are dedicated to education resources and offer ideas for your pupils' visit to the ICA. Come as a teacher or as yourself to enjoy a relaxing evening in the gallery.

Double Agent

Paweł Althamer/Nowolipie Group

Phil Collins

Dora García

Christoph Schlingensief

Barbara Visser

Donelle Woolford

Artur Zmijewski

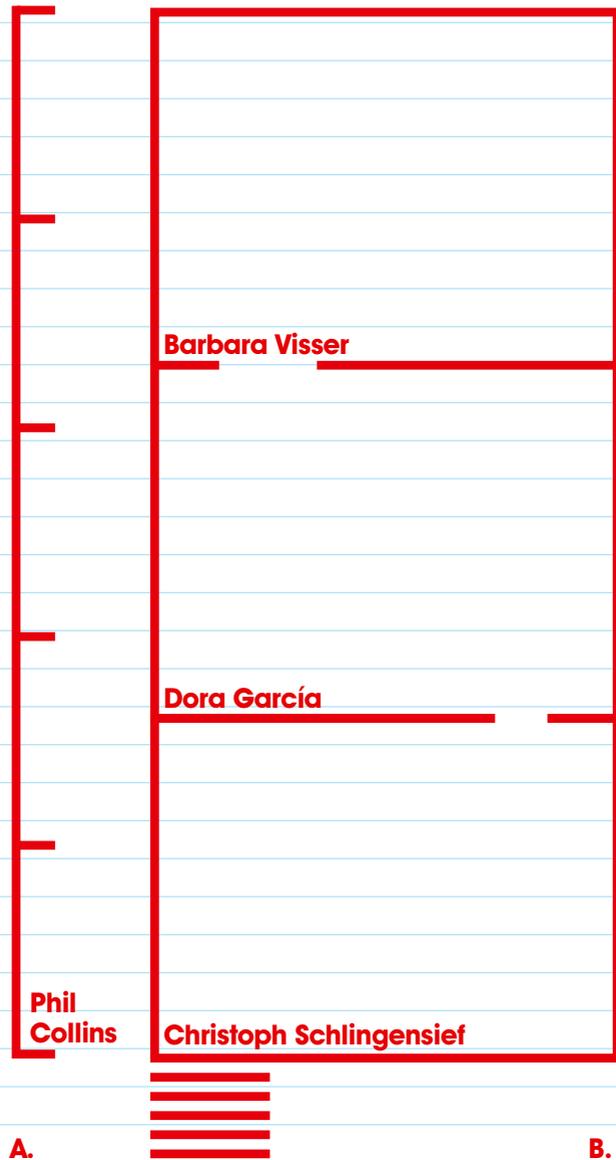
Double Agent is a group exhibition featuring artists who use other people as a medium, containing works in a variety of media, including video and live performance. These works challenge the traditional roles of the artist, their artwork and the audience.

In this exhibition, it is not always clear where the artwork ends and life takes over or what is real and what is fiction. The viewer is prompted to question who the creator of a piece is: Is it the name that appears on leaflets for the show, like “Phil Collins” or “Donelle Woolford”? Is it us, the supposed “audience”? Or, is it another group or person altogether? Many pieces demand that we are not passive viewers, but integral to the creation of artworks (whether we choose to be or not) as we move through the galleries. For this reason, this pack is organized not by artist, but by room, reflecting the importance of the visitor’s experience through the exhibition.

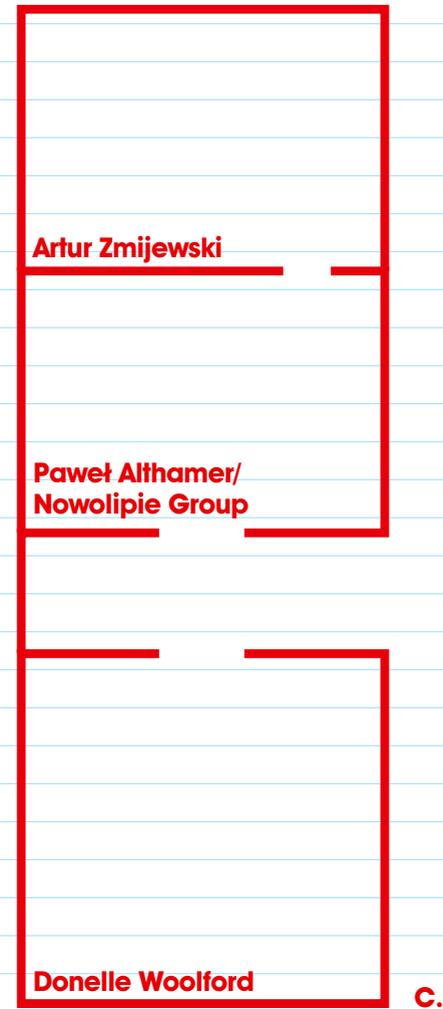
Christoph Schlingensief, Production still, The African Twin Towers, 2005 © Aino Laberenz



Exhibition Floor Plan



- A. Concourse
- B. Lower Gallery
- C. Upper Gallery



Themes:

Theme	Art And Design—Key Stage 3	Links to units in Key Stage 3	Art And Design—Key Stage 4
1. Art and the Public	Knowledge and understanding: Analyse the conventions of a visual tradition, and assess its foundational ideas.	History Unit 22: The role of the individual for good or ill?	Analyse & Evaluate: Respond to ideas of performance in the context of its history.
2. Lower Gallery, Room 1	Exploring and developing ideas: Analyse the codes and conventions of different genres and traditions.	Geography Unit 24: Passport to the world	Analyse & Evaluate: Respond to the work in context, asking questions about its place in art history and forming an ethical critique.
3. Lower Gallery, Room 2	Evaluating: Analyse ideas used by the artist and the methods she used to communicate them.	ICT Unit 10: Information—reliability, validity and bias. ICT Unit 3: Processing text and images	Respond: What kind of effect does this piece have (emotionally, artistically or politically)?
4. Lower Gallery, Room 3	Exploring and developing ideas: Using an artistic vocabulary, assess an artwork's effect on the viewer. Experiment with the methods used by the artist.	ICT Unit 10: Information—reliability, validity and bias. Citizenship Unit 9: The significance of the media in society	Develop and Explore: Respond to the work of this artist and try out a new technique.
5. Concourse	Knowledge and understanding: Explore how images can have an emotional or social impact.	ICT Unit 3: Processing text and images	Respond: What kind of effect can an image have?
6. Upper Gallery, Room 1	Exploring and developing ideas: Form a critique of cross-genre work that is slippery in meaning and identity.	History Unit 15: Black peoples of America from slavery to equality. ICT Unit 10: Information—reliability, validity and bias	Analyse & Evaluate: Respond to a complex conceptual work.
7. Upper Gallery, Room 2	Knowledge and understanding: Respond to questions of authorship and critique a socially engaged practice.	History Unit 22: The role of the individual for good or ill?	Respond: Address issues of authorship in the context of performance and curation.
8. Upper Gallery, Room 3	Knowledge and understanding: Explore issues of nationality and ethics in the context of an artwork.	History Unit 18: Hot war, cold war why did the major twentieth-century conflicts affect so many people? Citizenship Unit 13: How do we deal with conflict? Citizenship Unit 3: Human rights	Analyse & Evaluate: Explore questions of manipulation as well as nationality and ethics in the context of an artwork.

1. Art and the Public

For hundreds of years, the museum now known as the Louvre in Paris was a royal palace. But on 10 August 1793, it opened for free to the public as an art museum. From that day on, French citizens could take weekend strolls through the museum's "Grande Galerie" gazing at the artworks, most of which were paintings. This is one of the earliest instances in which people who were not necessarily of high class standing or artist themselves could simply look at an exhibition of artworks.

On the opening day of the Louvre, and at many art exhibitions to follow, the relationship between art and the public was usually passive, and the line between "viewer" and "artwork" clear. During the 20th century this began to change. What we know as performance art has its roots in Dada and Futurism, and picked up momentum during the 1950s with "Happenings", which were theatrical events organized by artists. Performance artists in the 1960s and 1970s explored their bodies as media, took on politics and often engaged in strenuous or dangerous physical acts. They also invited others to participate in their performances, as the artist Marina Abramovic did.

• **Working from the 1960s to the early 1980s, Joseph Beuys was a pioneer of "socially engaged art": he involved his students and members of the public in his work, and undertook projects in public space, often blurring the line between political action and art. Beuys famously stated that "Everyone is an artist". Do you agree with this idea? What do you think he meant by it?**

In the 1990s, artists began to work "relationally". This means that their work took the form of some kind of interaction with others. Like earlier performance art, this took place in a certain time and space and there was rarely a tangible product. The work in Double Agent furthers this push to dissolve the boundaries between the artist and the audience. In this exhibition we see performance art, socially-engaged artwork and political action come together.

• **Do you think it's possible to own a piece of performance art?**



Barbara Visser
Last Lecture, 2007
Courtesy Annet Gelink Gallery

More To Look At

Live Art UK: www.liveartuk.org/partners.htm

Live Art Development Agency: www.thisisliveart.co.uk

Dada: www.tranquileye.com/theatre/dada_theatre.html

Allan Kaprow: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Kaprow

Marina Abramovic: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marina_Abramovic

Chris Burden: www.crownpoint.com/artists/burden/burden.html

Relational Aesthetics:

www.stretcher.org/archives/r3_a/2002_11_13_r3_archive.php

Rirkrit Tiravanija:

www.artandculture.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/ACLive.woa/wa/artist?id=5

2. Lower Gallery, Room 1:

Christoph Schlingensiefel is an artist, filmmaker and theatre director. Some in his native Germany call him a “scandal-maker” due to his preference for controversial subject matter like Germany’s Nazi past, the death of Princess Diana and 9/11. Schlingensiefel’s artwork floods his audience with a barrage of images and information, clearing the way for a new twist on his subject. His work merges filmmaking, theatre, art and activism in innovative ways.

- **How much control do you think Schlingensiefel wielded in this project? Is he a megalomaniac theatre director himself, or is he dominated by the actors and non-actors participating in his artwork?**
- **Do you think the Namibian “locals” who form part of his cast were informed about the ideas behind the piece? Does it matter?**
- **As we ride the stairlift our shadow falls upon the projection, we are literally incorporated into the work. How does this make us feel?**

One of Schlingensiefel’s past projects involved the creation of his own political party where anyone could nominate themselves for the German federal election of 1998.

- **Is it possible for a piece of art to be just as political as a form of activism?**

More To Look At

Christoph Schlingensiefel: www.schlingensiefel.com/index_eng.html

Bertold Brecht: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertolt_Brecht

Joseph Beuys: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Beuys

The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination: www.labofii.net/home/



Christoph Schlingensiefel
Production still from the shoot for The African Twin Towers
© Aino Labrenz

3. Lower Gallery, Room 2:

“Life can only be understood by winding it back.”—Dora García

Dora García is a performance, installation and video artist from Spain. *Instant Narrative* comprises an observer positioned within the exhibition space who makes notes on visitors to the gallery—notes are simultaneously projected onto the wall of the gallery. The resultant text forms a real-time story in which the viewers are the protagonists, but the authorship of this narrative is a function of continual displacement—from the artist to the writer to the visitor .

- How many “authors” can you list who contribute to this piece?

- Does this work make you feel uncomfortable?
Do you think it is playful?

More To Look At

Dora García: www.doragarcia.net/

Dan Graham Performer/Audience/Mirror: www.ubu.com/sound/graham.html



Dora García
Instant Narrative (IN), as staged at Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, 2007

4. Lower Gallery, Room 3:

The video projection piece you see in this room began years ago when Dutch artist, Barbara Visser, was invited to give a talk about her work. Instead of speaking to the group directly, she hired an actress who looked and acted completely differently to herself. Visser hid in the next room and fed words to the actress through an earpiece. The audience wasn't aware that the woman speaking to them was not Barbara Visser! This performance was filmed and became the video piece *Lecture With An Actress*. Soon after, Visser was invited to give a talk about this piece. Once again, she hired an actress—this time, a woman who resembled her—and relayed her lecture to the actress through an earpiece. The actress delivered the lecture in front of a projection of the first lecture. The video of this performance is entitled *Lecture on Lecture with an Actress*. Visser's third performance, *Last Lecture*, is projected in this exhibition. In it, we still don't catch a full glimpse of the artist. Only her silhouette stands before a projection of *Lecture on Lecture with an Actress*.

- **Imagine you were part of the audience who believed that Barbara Visser was speaking to them. How would you feel after discovering that you had actually witnessed a performance?**

- **By having another person act for her, does Barbara Visser bring more or less attention to her role as the creator of this piece?**

Activity In The Gallery:

In the spirit of Barbara Visser, write instructions for your classmates detailing exactly how to behave in the exhibition. For example, you can tell them what to say in each room, how to move through Dora García's *Instant Narrative* and how to interact with other visitors.



Barbara Visser
Last Lecture, 2007
Courtesy Annet Gelink Gallery

More To Look At

Barbara Visser: www.barbaravisser.net/
Video art: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_art

5. Concourse:

Along the walls of the corridor, Phil Collins shows images from an ongoing piece called *you'll never work in this town again* that he began in 2004. We see photographs of curators, critics and others in the art world who Collins photographed immediately after he had slapped them. (They had been warned—and agreed to participate!)

- **Is it satisfying to see only documentation from a piece you will never experience first-hand?**

- **Why do you think Collins chose to photograph people from the art world? Does it matter what their identities are?**

More To Look At

Phil Collins at the Tate: www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?cgroupid=999999961&workid=84308&searchid=11077

Phil Collins at Kerlin Gallery: www.kerlin.ie/artists/Phil-Collins.aspx



Phil Collins
you'll never work in this town again
(*mark*), 2006
Courtesy the artist



Phil Collins
you'll never work in this town again
(*claire*), 2006
Courtesy the artist

6. Upper Gallery, Room 1:

**“What do you get when you buy a bootleg Beastie Boys CD from your local street entrepreneurs? An original copy of an original fake.”
—Donelle Woolford, “Ode To A Street Vendor”**

For Double Agent, the ICA’s Upper Galleries have taken on the character of artists’ studios. In the first room, Donelle Woolford, a young African-American artist presented by the artist Joe Scanlan, has set up a studio. She will be working in the exhibition space throughout the duration of Double Agent.

- Is Woolford performing, or is she simply a sculptor going about her work?
- How does Woolford’s practice addresses issues of race?
- What do you think it means that Woolford is “presented” by Joe Scanlan?

More To Look At

Donelle Woolford: www.thingsthatfall.com/donellewoolford.php

Review of Donelle Woolford’s show in New York: artforum.com/picks/

Joe Scanlan: www.thingsthatfall.com



Donelle Woolford in the studio
Photograph by Namik Minter and Frank Heath, courtesy Wallspace

7. Upper Gallery, Room 2:

For many years, Polish artist Pawel Althamer has led a ceramics class for adults with multiple sclerosis in Warsaw. They are called the Nowolipie Group. The classes provide a rich source of ideas for Althamer. Each class revolves around a different theme—such as castles or portraits of the Pope. This exhibition includes a display of ceramics by the group and the video *D.I.Y (Do It Yourself)*. The room has been set up to give the feel of an artists studio.

- **Who is the artist then? Is it Althamer, who is presenting the piece, or the people who made the ceramic objects?**

- **In what sense are the Lower Galleries also artists' studios?**

More To Look At

Pawel Althamer: www.culture.pl/en/culture/artykuly/os_althamer_pawel

Pawel Althamer's Self-Portrait as a Businessman (2002 – 4): www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/theworldasastage/pawel_althamer.shtm



Nowolipie Group, Warsaw
Courtesy Foksal Gallery Foundation

8. Upper Gallery, Room 3:

The video *Them* (2007, 27minutes) documents a series of painting workshops organized by the artist. These events feature groups of Christian, Jews, Young Socialists, and Polish nationalists, who are encouraged to respond to each group's symbolic depiction of its values. Over the course of the workshops, tensions build between the groups and culminate in an explosive impasse. As in many of Zmijewski's videos, the artist adopts an ambiguous role and is never clear to what degree his participants are acting with their own agency, or being manipulated to fulfill the requirements of his pre-planned narrative.

- **At what point does the situation stop being “set up” by the artist? Or does it?**
- **Do you think the camera seems detached from the event it is recording, or does it in some way imply a commentary?**
- **Zmijewski's previous work involves the actual moulding of peoples' bodies. How does that connect to this work?**

More To Look At

Artur Zmijewski: www.polishculture-nyc.org/zmijewski_more.htm



Artur Zmijewski
Them, 2007
Courtesy Foksal Gallery Foundation

Questions For Further Discussion:

- Some of the works in this exhibition attempt to exist as much as possible in “real life”. How does their being shown in a gallery space at the ICA affect this?
- Do you think that some of the pieces in this show have involved tricking the viewer or other people in some way? If so, are they immoral?

Back At School:

- Many of the artists in *Double Agent* display the influence of innovative theatre director Bertolt Brecht. Working in the early 20th century, Brecht used shouted stage directions and placards with instructions for actors during performances. Re-enact an event from recent history (as Christoph Schlingensiefel does). One group will direct in a “Brechtian” style as the other group performs. No rehearsal necessary!
- Research the “living sculpture” performances of British artists Gilbert and George. Photograph your classmates as “living sculptures” in public spaces.
- Invent a fictional artist. You can write their biography, decide where they went to art college, what their influences are, and more. You can even create one of their pieces. If you continued to develop this character, in what ways would they become a real artist?

Before Your Visit:

- The artists featured in *Double Agent* use other people as their medium. In Artur Zmijewski’s early work, he did this quite literally: the photographic piece *40 Szufiad (40 Drawers)* sees a man and a woman mould and press each other’s bodies to deform them. On the topic of his work, Smijewski stated, “In the beginning, my films’ main subject was the body treated the way a sculptor would treat clay. I was interested in the forms that, for example, a body subjected to physical pressure can assume.”

Working in pairs, “mould” your classmate’s body by telling them where to position themselves, how to place their arms and legs in relation to the rest of their body, what kind of expression to have on their face and any other detail you come up with. Document this through photographs.

- Did your partner match your vision of how you wanted their body to be positioned?
- Who is the real author of the resulting photographs?
- Did this collaboration feel unfair in any way?
- Can you think of other ways (perhaps less literal) in which an artist might use other people as a medium?