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## Double Agent

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London:  
14 February – 6 April 2008  
Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick :  
26 April – 28 June 2008  
BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead:  
21 May – 17 Aug 2008

**Paweł Althamer / Nowolipie Group, Phil Collins, Dora García,  
Donelle Woolford, Christoph Schlingensief, Barbara Visser, Artur Zmijewski**

*Double Agent* is a group exhibition featuring artists who use other people as a medium. All of the works raise questions of performance and authorship, and in particular the issues that arise when the artist is no longer the central agent in his or her own work, but operates through a range of individuals, communities and surrogates. The show contains works in a variety of media, including video and live performance – works which are often slippery in meaning or disquieting in effect. The exhibition tours to three venues in the UK, and includes the British premieres of a number of significant works, as well as new commissions specific to each venue.

A number of the works in *Double Agent* explore the ethics of performance and representation, including the power relations involved in the use of non-professional subjects. Artist, filmmaker and theatre director Christoph Schlingensief (German, born 1960 in Oberhausen, lives in Berlin) is represented by a video installation, one that uses footage that the artist gathered in 2005 as part of his project *The African Twin Towers* – the story of a megalomaniac theatre director attempting to stage the 9-11 story in Namibia, shot on location with a cast of locals as well as Schlingensief's regular 'family' of performers.

Another artist to explore the ethics of representation is Artur Zmijewski (Polish, born 1966 in Warsaw, lives in Warsaw). In his video *Them* (2007) the artist contrives a series of confrontations between Christians, Jews, Young Socialists, and Polish nationalists; the tensions build between the groups and culminate in an explosive *impasse*. Phil Collins (English, born in 1970 Runcorn, lives in Glasgow) shows images from *you'll never work in this town again* (2004-ongoing), a series of photographic portraits of curators, critics and others in the art world – photographed on the understanding that their image would be taken immediately after he had slapped them.

Other works were made by – or feature – figures who operate as extensions for the artist. The works of Paweł Althamer (Polish, born 1967 in Warsaw, lives in Warsaw) are frequently based on his identification with marginal subjects. For many years he has led a ceramics class for an organisation in Warsaw called the Nowolipie Group, for adults with multiple sclerosis, and the exhibition includes a display of their works. Barbara Visser (Dutch, born 1966 in Haarlem, lives in Brussels and Amsterdam) shows the video installation *Last Lecture* (2007), a multi-layered work which draws on footage of lectures in which actresses have been presented as Barbara Visser, sometimes receiving instructions from the artist through an earpiece.

A final pair of contributions brings a live component into the exhibition. Dora García (Spanish, born 1965 in Valladolid, lives and works in Brussels) exhibits *Instant Narrative (IN)* (2006-2008), which involves an observer positioned within the exhibition space, making clandestine notes on visitors to the exhibition – notes which are revealed to members of the public during the course of their visit. As his contribution to the exhibition, Joe Scanlan (American, born 1961 in Stoutsville, OH, lives in New Haven, CT) presents the up-and-coming artist Donelle Woolford (American, born 1980 in Conyers, Georgia, lives in Harlem, NY), who at set times is using one of the ICA's upper galleries as a studio to construct her own sculptures.

*Double Agent* has been curated by **Claire Bishop** (Assistant Professor of History of Art at Warwick University) and **Mark Sladen** (Director of Exhibitions, ICA). It is an ICA touring exhibition supported by **Arts Council England**. Additional support has been provided by **SEACEX** (State Corporation for Spanish Cultural Action Abroad), the **Mondriaan Foundation**, and the **Polish Cultural Institute**.



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