



portfolio

Sébastien Pesot

2010

Artistic approach

His artistic approach has evolved immensely over the last few years and his last computer graphics project (*Feux Forêt*, 2010) represents a critical stage in this transformation. In his early work, he was mostly concerned with the plasticity of the video graphic image, the possibilities of deconstruction and reconstruction of the video image. His interest lay in an abstraction and formalism similar to that found in painting, together with a certain level of social commitment. His work in video installations and as a musical and performing artist has led him to move beyond the framework of the screen. He began to explore two new approaches in his creative work: an interest in performance and self-representation, and the extension of his video creations throughout physical space. This interest in the material and corporal aspects of his work led inevitably to the desire to extract the image from the screen and re-inject it into the material world, thereby initiating certain relationships between the virtual image and the physical environment.



Feux Forêt

Digital prints, mix-media and video-objects
Slash-tmp, Berlin, 2010

© Sébastien Pesot

Auto-

The *Auto-* project is a series of complementary works that approach, in different ways, the relationships among the body (my body), the individual (me), and the automobile. These equivocal relationships provide various formal and conceptual explorations. The relationship between the automobile and the individual body can obviously be examined from a number of perspectives. One could investigate, for example, the connection between self-affirmation and vehicle ownership, the automobile as an extension of the body, which one hopes will attract the attention of others. Here, vehicles become a sign of social status, or of belonging to a particular group (be they luxury cars, sports cars, customized, or even in disrepair).

The works proposed here, however, will not extend far into this socio-psychological territory, which has already been well documented and explored. The *Auto-* exhibition will take a different, more intimist approach: the automobile as a closed space, an isolated and private area, an environment in movement; the automobile as a symbol of mobility and displacement; the automobile as an object that gives rise to a series of distinct behavioural and emotional responses.

Galerie d'art



Auto-
Video-objects, video installations, sculpture
Galerie de l'Université de Sherbrooke, 2009

Photo : François Lafrance

“In his exhibition entitled *Auto-*, Sébastien Pesot sets up a group of installations based on a common theme: the interconnections between the self-portrait (autoportrait) and the automobile. Seemingly antithetical at first glance, these two subjects are in fact closely intertwined for the artist, who bases his research on a form of introspection, defining what he is as an artist through parallels with the automobile as an independent entity. Pesot’s interest in the self-portrait, a genre that pervades the history of art, allows him to represent himself in a various poses and settings, providing a unique perspective on his era, one in which the public can recognize themselves. To this end, the artist uses the automobile not only for its private space, but also for its plastic qualities, which serve as matrix for various videographic explorations. Pesot sets up a series of works that distort or hijack most of the referents tied to the automobile (including such notions as power, style, etc.), along with its utilitarian qualities and ability to create a feeling of belonging to a social group.

In the triptych *Scopie*, three television monitors project a car captured in profile. The device allows the artist to execute a series of independent actions from one monitor to the next. This splitting of the image, it should be pointed out, involves many different actions by the artist, all interrelated. The car thus serves as a kind of sounding box, an instrument for the artist to explore the vehicle’s various sonorities, creating a highly unusual “mechanical” score. Pesot amuses himself as he uses the roof as a drum, drags a rake over the hood, makes the driver’s door creak, etc. He fiddles with the bodywork, which becomes a source of audio creation, reminiscent of his earlier installation *Camera Orchestra*.



Auto-

Video-objects, video installations, sculpture
Galerie de l'Université de Sherbrooke, 2009

Photo : François Lafrance

In the installation *Cinétique*, the roof of the automobile becomes a screen, a flat surface, a blank canvas. The image, projected on the ground, retains the actual dimensions of the vehicle that the artist filmed from above. Pesot incorporates numerous objects that allude to his current life: a doll belonging to his daughter, a saw, a hunter's vest, a yellow rope, thereby forming a contemporary, self-referential still life. Pesot is affirming his status as an artist, as a man, as an artist. In line with the idea of considering the car a private space, the artist's actions remain relatively commonplace, perhaps because they are linked to an everyday reality experienced by many people. [...] On the other hand, these gestures repeated in a loop give the impression that the car has sprung suddenly to life: the flashers and wipers become activated. The artist seems at one with the engine, as if it is an extension of his body, a site to reveal his life or to conceal the unknown. Various other elements appear on the screen as well, objects which the artist has filmed and placed on the ground (pail, tool chest), which echo the images projected on the ground, thus breaking the flatness of the support surface that the car has become.

Route oscillates between photographic and videographic representation. An aluminum plate presents the artist's life-size silhouette, a negative image in which his nudity is apparent, albeit veiled. This imposing silhouette is pierced at the head, chest and genitals by three screens, symbolizing the mental, emotional and sexual zones. The images projected in each of these spaces pertain to states or conditions: hunger, desire, either shown or hidden, the knots that are kept inside, the body at rest. This work would seem to be a kind of synthesis of the artist's explorations of self-representation.

Mobile, one of the major pieces of this exhibition, uses a car shelter as a projection surface. An iconic object in our winter landscapes, the shelter here takes on a poetic dimension. A swirling image is barely distinguishable at first sight, but gradually we make out a man dressed in black who is shovelling out a path in the snow. The repetitive action of the artist, almost choreographic in nature, is increased by a device concealed inside the shelter. An immense mirror ball slowly turns, creating a sparkling pattern on the white canvas. Divorced from its normal context, the shelter no longer serves to protect the car, functioning instead as a projection booth or showcase for the images.

In this group of works, the artist is never totally represented, as if demonstrating a certain modesty in revealing himself as he really is. We glimpse his body, which is sometimes deformed, truncated, minuscule, lost within a vast white surface, becoming little more than a dot. Examining the idea of the car as an extension of ourselves, as an image we project to others, Sébastien Pesot explores the many ways we represent ourselves to others by diverting the “affective” associations we may feel for the automobile-object. The artist’s self-representation in multiple poses, moreover, allows him to open up his artistic approach, to explore a wide range of video environments.”

Manon Tourigny

The Spaces of Self-Projection, extract from the exposition catalogue



Auto-

Video-objects, video installations, sculpture
Galerie de l'Université de Sherbrooke, 2009

Photo : François Lafrance

Camera Orchestra

“The moment you enter the gallery, you know this exhibition will cause a sensation. Hung on a self-supporting wall are dozens of cymbals giving off hypnotic reflections, some bearing signs of wear, others simply broken, retaining the signs of their acoustic history. On another wall, an entire drum kit has been turned upside down and planted there, as if in a state of weightlessness, awaiting a percussionist who walks on walls. Finally, three screens have a prominent place in the layout of the gallery [...]

Interested in synchronicity and in particular the synchronism between moving images and sound, Pesot deploys three independent videos (one per screen), which are linked through simultaneous orchestration. Each short film is thus like a musician, conducted by the artist to create an acoustic or percussive harmony. To say the least, this exhibition makes noise ...

Despite the disparate cinematic elements that capture or divert the viewer’s attention, the unity of the work is quite remarkable, made possible by a unique soundtrack produced by the sound effects of each video. [...] Pesot’s work achieves an extraordinary synchronism, which the least imperfection could have upset. A trap masterfully avoided by the artist.”

Jean-François Caron

Voir Newspaper (Alma), September 2009



Caméra Orchestra
Video installations, sculptures
Galerie Horace, Sherbrooke, 2006

@ Sébastien Pesot



Caméra Orchestra
Maison de la culture Côte-des-neiges,
Montréal 2008

© Sébastien Pesot

“The deconstruction of the image, of the narrative, has been a common artistic practice for some time now, especially with the advent of video art. What makes this work so distinctive is its exploration of synchronism, its ordering of a kind of chaos.

Three screens aligned on a wall are emitting what appears to be the sound from one and the same audiotape. And yet each screen has its own music, just as it has its own images, its own story. [...]

Together, orchestrated by the camera (hence the title), the three audio sources create the music. The exercise comes close to a technical demonstration, the musicality hanging by a very slender thread owing to the skilfulness of the montage. Its richness lies elsewhere.

Caméra Orchestra, like the camera obscura its title evokes, can be seen as a box in which images and sounds are projected. Above all else, it questions our preconceived ideas, our habit of settling for appearances. Here, a sound does not necessarily go with the image we expect. What comes first, the sound or the image? Is it because we see a musician that we hear music?

This jumbling of the senses goes hand in hand with a jumbling of hierarchies, inasmuch as hearing is secondary when accompanied by sight. Although it is scarcely new, the idea of finding poetry in ordinary objects is fascinating in this work. The playful—indeed jubilatory and cathartic—nature of destruction is not at all simplistic. Pesot tackles the materiality of the object, desanctifies it, destruction reaching the noble status of creation.”

Jérôme Delgado
Le Devoir, February 2008

Face-à-face

Video installation
Praxis art actuel, Blainville, 2008

© Sébastien Pesot



Show de chaises

Video installation (in-situ)
Praxis art actuel, Blainville, 2008

© Sébastien Pesot



Frontières, Borders, Fronteras

Video installation

Galerie de l'université de Sherbrooke, 2008

© Sébastien Pesot



Danye Brochu and Sébastien Pesot form *Scalène*, a duo of performance artists. Scalene refers to a triangle that has no equal sides, no equal angles, and no axis of symmetry. The *Scalène* project defines itself as the meeting between the two artists and the object of their creation. Their exploration and research can also refer to the meeting between three approaches: theater, performance and media art.

“Divided into three acts, the work presents a woman sitting before a videographic mirror, trying her best to communicate via a telephone and other devices (voice mailbox, automated menus). The performance hinges on a phrase that recurs as a leitmotif: “Don’t say anything, you saw nothing and that’s the end of it.” The first act has a decidedly theatrical feel. The work of Brochu (whose path has been primarily theatrical) evokes that of an actress, and even more than her actions, gestures or on-stage presence, it is her dramatic performance that gives the first act its tone. In the second act, the media technology highlights the tensions between the presence of Brochu in real time and space and that, simulated, of the video image. From the moment that the images of Brochu in the mirror lose their real time and assume that of a digital simulacrum (accelerations, inversions, etc.), the concreteness of the actress’s body and her real and immediate presence in space and time are contaminated by the abstract and distorted digital images. Two temporalities thus co-exist: a direct presence governing the images in the mirror and reacting to them, and a pre-recorded and simulated presence interfering with the real unfolding of events. The body becomes a little less real, relegated to the status of raw material submitted to the all-powerful digital manipulations. The resulting tensions between presence and real time on the one hand and mediatized time on the other accurately reflect certain paradigmatic transformations of our era. Our relationship to the body, space and time has been profoundly transformed by digital technologies, and the foundations of what once represented a full sensory experience and the continuity of real time are being inexorably eroded...”

Eric Desmarais, *Dasein and Electronic Media Technology: Temporality, Theatricality, Contextuality*



Messageries

Scalène performance

Espace [im] média, Sporobole, 2009

© Scalène

Camera Performa

Performance

Le lieu, Ville de Québec, 2009

© Sébastien Pesot



Camera Performa

Performance

Le lieu, Ville de Québec, 2009

© Sébastien Pesot



One Hundred Dead Colors

5ième Manifestation Internationale vidéo
et art électronique, Montréal , 2002

© Sébastien Pesot



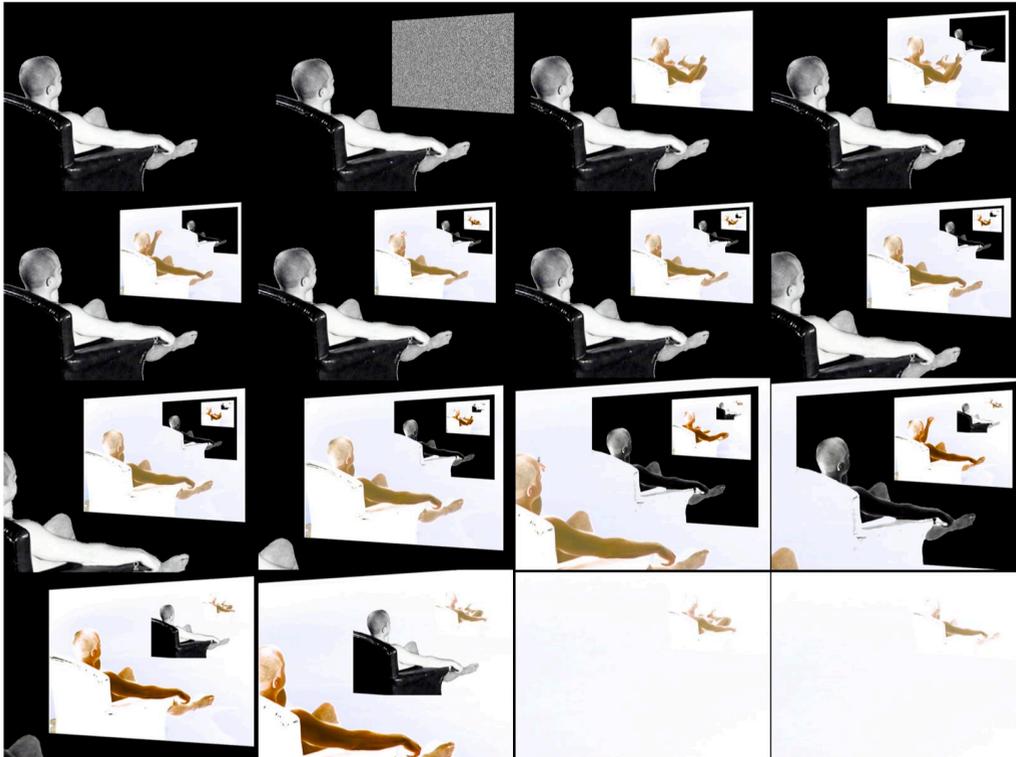
“Another example of monody is Sébastien Pesot’s video letter *Placebo* (1997), in which a young man describes his surrealist urban environment to a female friend. Here, however, we are confronted with a fantastical universe that is openly asserted, the plasticity of the highly stylized images robbing them of any transparency. The credible discourse of the narrator contrasts sharply with the strangeness of the context created by the images; only the epistolary form has plausibility. Pesot also makes use of the conventional strategies of monody: the text reflects the vision of the narrator-speaker, the familiar ‘*tu*’ representing the sole allusion to the letter’s addressee, the ‘other’ serving as a pretext for autobiographical discourse.

Once again, the opening words are determinative: ‘My dear friend, I miss you so much,’ recited in a voice-over by the narrator, establishes the epistolary form. The same applies to the closing words: ‘I look forward to seeing you again, come and visit me if you can, big kiss, I’m thinking of you’; these phrases underscore the distance between the two individuals, justifying the recourse to the letter.”

Joanne Lalonde

Art réseau et modalités épistolaires, Spring 2002

<http://www.erudit.org/revue/pr/2002/v30/n1/006694ar.html>



Hiatus

Single Channel
1 min 00 sec, 2001

© Sébastien Pesot

Citizen

Single Channel
5 min 00 sec, 2003

© Sébastien Pesot



Démocratie

Single Channel
5 min 30 sec, 2002

© Sébastien Pesot



Paradoxa

Single Channel
8 min 50 sec, 1999

© Sébastien Pesot

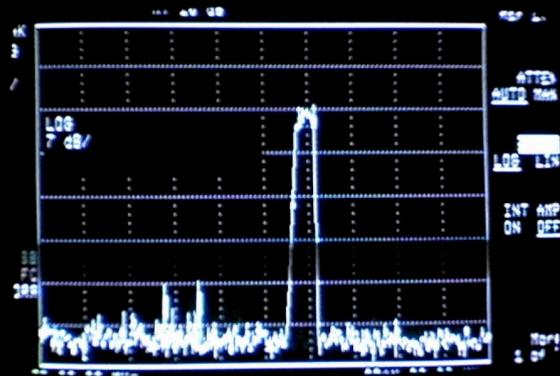


Ciao Chaos

Single Channel
8 min 00 sec, 2008

© Sébastien Pesot





Genesis

Single Channel
6 min 20 sec, 2005

© Sébastien Pesot

Biography

Born in Rimouski (Québec, Canada) in 1971, Sébastien Pesot completed a Bachelor's degree in art history at the Université de Montréal in 1996 and a Master's degree at the École des arts visuels de Montréal (UQAM), in 2000. He presently resides in the Eastern Townships, where he teaches at the Université de Sherbrooke. After a decade as a drummer in various punk rock bands, Pesot produced several experimental videos which have been screened in twenty different countries at festivals and events including the 3rd, 4th and 5th Manifestation internationale vidéo et art électronique (Montreal), FIFA (Montreal), WRO 01 and 03, the Media Arts Biennial (Poland) and Chroma (Mexico), where he was the recipient of the audience award for best video. Since then he has mainly been producing audio-video installations, while continuing to work on performance art and computer graphics. His solo work has been featured at Slash-tmp in Berlin (2010), Au Lieu in Quebec City (2009) and the Côte-des-Neiges Cultural Center in Montreal (2008), among others. For more information, visit www.sebastienpesot.com

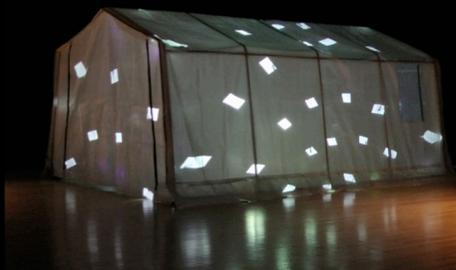
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