

TONS OF
GREAT TITLES
TO CHOOSE FROM!

Under New Management
Video Store

MARCH 7 - APRIL 12, 2013

From one thing into another

In his introduction to the book, *Commerce by Artists*, Luis Jacob describes commerce as "...a flow or transfer of something to one place or another.... to become another identity, a different role within a given field."¹ That this occurs using money as a standard currency, as Jacob points out, is simply a convention.² Money creates almost unlimited numbers of people with whom we can trade, and an almost unlimited number of goods and services we can access. If we have money, it spares us the burden of having to engage in the direct transfer of goods we've produced ourselves, or the difficulty of making everything we need or desire. And it enables us to take advantages of changes in value, whether of real estate, grain or currency, so that we might profit through buying them at a lower price and selling them later at a higher price. If one doesn't have any currency, one instead needs something non-monetary that can be transferred into currency, or traded for whichever good or service one needs. For example, in the early 1980s, my family needed a new car, but had no money. We did have a year-old beef steer, and exchanged half of the meat for a used station wagon, and the other half of which we ate the following winter. This transfer occurred without any cash being involved, in contrast to exchanges that occur through elaborate market mechanisms, and which alienate us from the production of the goods we consume.

Engaging in commercial exchange without having money to standardize this process requires both creativity and labour, which can only be one's own. One must offer something that has value in the economy where the transaction occurs. While on the surface, *Under New Management* looks like a video store – albeit one that rents video art instead of action movies, romantic-comedies or horror films – it foregrounds the act of commercial exchange by enabling visitors to negotiate the amount of payment for the rental, the form of currency that is used, or for that matter, whether there is any payment to be made at all. It asks its audience to consider what value does this video have to them, and what kind of payment has value to the gallery, to the curator, and to the artist. These both require reflection on the meaning of the artwork itself – the video and the video store – and on the economies in which both artist and viewer are situated. The video may offer the viewer a different set of values and ideas from those familiar to them, provide a moment of poetic insight, or suggest a new way of narrating an experience. The artists and curators, on the other-hand, may need people to talk and write about their work, to incorporate and reflect their work and

1 Luis Jacob, "Commerce by Artists," in Luis Jacob (ed). *Commerce by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 2011) p. 1-2.

2 Ibid.

ideas so that it circulates and becomes known to others, and to critique their work so that it changes and develops.

In *Under New Management* the viewer is no longer merely a spectator, but is invited to intervene into and shape the production of value, and to define and participate in a set of economic relationships that might have previously been reduced to standard monetary transactions. At once a video store, an exhibition venue, and an artwork, it presents a minor intervention into the endless alienated economic exchanges that occur everywhere we go. It invites the viewer to enact a process of transubstantiation – changing one thing into another – completing the work with each rental transaction.

— Amish Morrell, February 2013

PROJECT STATEMENT

Under New Management: Video Store is an exhibition which takes the form of a video rental store that carries artists' videos. The project employs the characteristics of the retail environment to connect to the local community while challenging the gallery's role as an intermediary that delimits the viewer's direct access to art. Video titles in stock are artists' works procured through an open call for submissions. "Customers" are asked to pay what they wish, which can be interpreted as cash, a non-monetary exchange, critique, or no remuneration. This facet is in place as an experimental form of engagement, where artists have the opportunity to receive responses directly from viewers. In turn, the viewer has an uncommon channel to the artist. In addition to payment, rental and return are also on an honour-system basis to remove barriers that exist due to membership requirements, deposits, and return policies at commercial ventures.

Boundaries are blurred and expectations subverted through a presentation model that proposes a hybrid between the gallery context and the broader public sphere. Currently, we are on the cusp of the dematerialization of the video rental business. Large corporate chains and family run businesses share in the same fate. The most unfortunate loss is that of the local independent operation that carried rare titles, cult favorites, documentaries, entire sections devoted to directors, experimental films and hard to find foreign titles. *Under New Management: Video Store* provides audiences with perhaps the last fleeting, opportunity to view content that is not produced strictly by Hollywood with blockbuster aspirations.

BIOGRAPHIES

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT (UNM) is comprised of the curatorial team Suzanne Carte and Su-Ying Lee, a collective of cultural producers working in contemporary art. Operating as a mutable entity, *UNM* re-invents roles and shifts boundaries to inspire production and engagement. Collaboration with new and experimental strategies is at the forefront of their practice.

SUZANNE CARTE is an independent curator and critical art writer. Currently, she works as the Assistant Curator at the Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) focusing on an integrative model to utilize public programming as a pedagogical tool within the academic institution. Previously she held positions as outreach programmer for the Blackwood Gallery and the Art Gallery of Mississauga and as professional development and public program coordinator at the Ontario Association of Art Galleries. Within Suzanne's independent practice, she has curated exhibitions in public spaces, artist-run centres, commercial and public art galleries including *All Systems Go!*, *Under New Management*, *MOTEL* and *Man's Ruin*.

SU-YING LEE is the Assistant Curator at the Museum of Canadian Contemporary Art (MOCCA). From 2011-2012, she was Curator in Residence at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts. Lee has both institutional experience and a number of independent projects to her credit. She has curated exhibitions that include the work of Kent Monkman and Lawrence Weiner and commissioned the work of Harrell Fletcher and Wendy Red Star. Her curatorial practice has been steadily evolving into the expanded field. Lee is interested in the role of curator as co-conspirator, accomplice and active agent. She seeks new ways to mobilize art, audiences and context.

AMISH MORRELL is Editor of *C Magazine*, a quarterly journal on contemporary international art, and Special Lecturer in Visual Studies at the University of Toronto Mississauga. He has written for publications including *Art Papers*, *Ciel Variable*, *Fuse Magazine*, *History of Photography* and *Prefix Photo*. Curatorial projects include *The Frontier is Here*, an exhibition of works by contemporary Canadian and international artists that explore landscape and identity, and *The Walking Projects*, a collaborative project to produce new artworks that investigate walking as aesthetic practice. He recently edited *The Anti-Catalogue* (The Model, 2010), a book on contemporary artists collectives, and is published in *Byproduct: on the excess of embedded art practices* (YYZBooks, 2010), edited by Marisa Jahn.

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ODD
GALLERY

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Box 8000 | Dawson City, Yukon | (867) 993-5005
Gallery Hours: 11 AM - 5 PM, Tuesday - Saturday

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