

Re-sounding a partisan (micro)politics? by Gillian Whiteley, Geoff Bright and Walt Shaw (aka *Alchemy/Schmalchemy*)

The accompanying sound file is a short excerpt 'OoooO-Oooooo Medvedkine' from a live, freely improvised sonic performance and discussion – *Rhodiacéta (Re-)Response* – that we, as [Alchemy/Schmalchemy](#) (A/S), generated on 17 October 2018 at Loughborough University in the UK. Our performance was in (re-)response to one of the exhibits in the [Re-Imagining Citizenship](#) exhibition, an ongoing international project brought together by members of the Politicized Practice, Anarchist and Theatre and Performance Research Groups at the university. In designing our six-part performance we took our cue from a set of six collective drawings contributed to the exhibition by Contrat Social - a research group of art students and staff from Institut Supérieur des Beaux-Arts de Besançon - using them as visual scores. Contrat Social's intervention had itself been a response to Chris Marker's 1967 documentary film, [A bientôt j'espère](#), about the major strike at the Rhodiacéta textile factory in Besançon during that year. Contrat Social had conducted their own archive research, gathered audio footage and interviewed former strikers in what was essentially a re-visiting and re-laying of the film as a response to the 1967 struggle from our current contemporary context.

We wanted to lay another, sonic, layer over some of the visual materials that Contrat Social produced and run it against the visual background of Marker's film (hence the title *Rhodiacéta (Re-)Response*) in our own attempt to devise a kind of non-representational micro-political partisan anthem that might have a nomadic political energy of its own - looping out of *Re-Imagining Citizenship* and Contrat Social and now into *Edinost*, and also right back to Besançon where film/audio of our performance has been sent - in the hope of a further 're-(re-) response'. As individuals, we have strong and long activist backgrounds but our project A/S is inherently cautious of any assumption that the imperatives of the moment – particularly the rise of the Right across Europe – can be effectively met simply by re-energizing the heroic narratives of militant action that dominated partisanship in the Twentieth Century. We established A/S nearly ten years ago as project that sees its field of intervention as the entire entangled range of Guattari's 'three ecologies'. While having a variety of focusses, some manifestations have emphasised politicised practices of memory and re-imagination (see [Node/Flow/Mass: Disaster Box](#), Magna, 2012).

Rhodiacéta (Re-)Response is our attempt to work micro-politically (in Guattari's terms) by attending to the place of Spinoza's 'joyous affect' in any renewed partisan aesthetic. The selection 'OoooO-Oooooo Medvedkine' uses the sixth of the Contrat Social collective drawings as a score for the final section of our performance. The name is ours, but activates the graffiti-like inscription on the drawing which, for us, encompasses the political/aesthetic energy available in the deliberate productive collision of the grand partisan imagination of the past (the Soviet film director Aleksandr Medvedkin inspired the Rhodiacéta strikers to form the first Medvedkine group to make their own films in the 1960s/70s) and the dispersed, rhizomatic affective flows of becoming ("OoooO-Oooooo") that seem so significant to a contemporary 'politics of affect' of the present and any re-sounding of the resounding partisan voice.

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