

## Moderna @ Platform | Oliver Ressler

### Screening:

07 January 2003, Tuesday at 6:30 pm

Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center will host the videos of Austrian artist Oliver Ressler. The videos, "Rote Zora", "This is what democracy looks like!" and "Disobbedienti" will be shown on 7<sup>th</sup> of January, at 6:30 pm.

Oliver Ressler focuses his art on political activism in Europe. His work points to the lack of democracy in certain countries and in the globalisation process. He examines the political structures that may provoke civil disobedience or direct action, which may lead to political awakening among some people, but which may also have momentous consequences for others.

He is no objective observer – he is part of the demonstration. This is evident in *This is what democracy looks like!* (2002), which concerns the demonstrations in Salzburg in 2001. In the video *Rote Zora* (2000), we meet an action group in Germany, where several people in the group landed in difficult situations because of their political convictions. *Disobbedienti* (2002) is a newly produced work that has only been shown twice before. It focuses on "social" disobedience (comp. civil disobedience) in Italy and is directed against Italian conservative policies and the power structure within the Italian media.

Moderna @ Platform, Moderna Museet's 2002-2003 Contemporary Film and Video Program, is curated by Catrin Lundqvist. Each month until May 2003 a different contemporary artist will be showcased in a one-night "miniature retrospective" presentation. The series is supported by **Swedish Institute**.

### 2002

27 September: Isaac Julien, London  
25 October: Lotte Konow Lund, Oslo  
29 November: Tran, T. Kim-Trang, Claremont, USA

### 2003

07 January: Oliver Ressler, Vienna  
31 January: Salla Tykkä, Helsinki  
28 February: Jennifer Reeder, Chicago  
28 March: Hassan Khan, Cairo  
25 April: Hito Steyerl, Berlin  
30 May: Jesper Nordahl, Stockholm

## OLIVER RESSLER

Oliver Ressler lives and works in Vienna, Austria, a country that has attracted a great deal of attention over recent years because of the rise of politically conservative forces. New, harsher regulations on immigration threaten to create a "Fortress Europe", which has prompted Oliver Ressler to focus his art on political activism in Europe. His work points to the lack of democracy in certain countries and in the globalisation process. He examines the political structures that may provoke civil disobedience or direct action, which may lead to political awakening among some people, but which may also have momentous consequences for others.

Ressler's working methods recall those of investigative, muckraking journalists, but his camera angles and his attitudes are different. He is no objective observer – he is part of the demonstration. This is evident in *This is what democracy looks like!* (2002), which concerns the demonstrations in Salzburg in 2001. The conflicts are made visible in a way that also reveals the artist's own political views. Therefore Oliver Ressler's work is not only about politics; the work itself constitutes a political stance vis à vis burning political issues.

In the video *Rote Zora* (2000), we meet an action group in Germany, where several people in the group landed in difficult situations because of their political convictions. They oppose atomic and genetic technology and carry out direct actions against companies developing these technologies. As always in Ressler's video work, *Rote Zora* consists of interviews with the people involved, whose stories are both moving and extremely frightening.

*Disobbedienti* (2002) is a newly produced work that has only been shown twice before. It focuses on "social" disobedience (comp. civil disobedience) in Italy and is directed against Italian conservative policies and the power structure within the Italian media, which is strongly bound to the former media mogul and present prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. This enormous media power concentration is one of the reasons behind the performance-like political activism the video shows us.

Oliver Ressler also creates installations that address the public directly and concretely. After having been invited to participate in a competition in the Austrian town of Kapfenberg, he was asked to create an installation around the author Erich Fried (1921-1988), who was famous for his political poetry. One of the texts featured in the installation is an excerpt from Fried's "*Zur Kenntlichkeit*" (On Recognition) from 1975-77: Is a democracy/where it is not/ permitted to say/that it is not/a real democracy/really a/real democracy?

In the spring of 2002, Oliver Ressler was invited by Kunstverein Munchen to participate in the project, Exchange and Transform. His contribution consisted of posters, placed around the city, that concerned events in conjunction with the NATO security conference held in Munich 1-3 February 2002. (Because of the conference, the right to demonstrate was restricted.) On several occasions Ressler stood next to his posters and asked people passing by: "What is this poster about? Who do you think is behind it?" By doing this he came in direct contact with the people of Munich, posing questions that most of them had definite opinions about. The replies were later documented in a video presented at Kunstverein.

Oliver Ressler was born in 1970 in Knittelfeld, Austria

Catrin Lundqvist, programme curator, Moderna Museet  
Translation: Jan Teeland