

- **Exhibition:** “La chanson”
  - **Artists:** John Baldessari · Jérôme Bel · Johanna Billing · Discoteca Flaming Star · Phil Collins · Alonso Gil · Douglas Gordon · Jeleton · Marta de Gonzalo y Publio Pérez Prieto · Susan Philipsz · Mathias Poledna · Juan Pérez Agirregoikoa · Paul Rooney · Mika Taanila
  - **Inauguration:** 21 July, 20:30 h.
  - **Date:** 21 July – 13 November 2011.
  - **Exhibition Session:** Song as a Force of Social Transformation
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What is the reason for calling this group exhibition *La Chanson*? The show, which brings different visual and sound installations together, takes its name from the French musical movement of the 1950s and 60s led by Edith Piaf, Jacques Brel, Boris Vian, Serge Gainsbourg, Juliette Gréco, Georges Brassens and Léo Ferré, among others.

The underlying reason is not the search for parallels between past and present, but rather something essential to most of the main figures of the Chanson movement: the natural combination of contrasts they created in their songs. For example, the use of irony, but also of drama; their total dedication to the theme of love, yet without forgetting other subjects of a political kind; their utilization of the simple and direct, along with the theatrical and metaphorical; the importance of their preoccupation with the emotional, but at the same level as the social. It is these contrasts, combined with apparent ease by the Chanson movement, that provide the focus for this group exhibition, which-like the rest of its companions in the exhibition cycle devoted to the transformative social force attributed to song-attempts to analyze the often catalytic role that the popular music of recent decades has played in instigating major changes of both a personal and collective kind.

While the influence of rock music on contemporary art has been studied in a number of exhibitions in the past, the contribution of this show lies in its way of re-evaluating the crucial importance of popular music movements-and especially of Chanson-in the changes occurring in the second half of the 20th century. These changes are, on the

one hand, cultural, involving individual and group habits, and ways of experiencing sexuality, of dressing, of relating to other people, of thinking and of sharing certain moments. And also of a social nature, be it political (events triggering or associated with particular workers' struggles and collective reactions, for example) or economic (the birth and development of an exceedingly powerful cultural industry over the years, as well as the breeding ground and subsequent propagation of immaterial capitalism).

As a group exhibition what *La chanson* sets out to investigate, then, is how to combine the personal and the political through a musical format-the pop song-reused as an expedient by numerous contemporary artists. In it, these artists see a way of confronting popular culture by means of an everyday cultural form that has led to many changes of a private and collective kind. Pop music not only accompanies us in our daily lives-on many occasions it has also aided and abetted profound changes in our mental habits and ways of life. Today, even though it has lost its pre-eminence as a major cultural industry and is flailing about in a generalized crisis, it possesses all the ingredients for today's artists to pay attention to it as an instrument of communication, propaganda, transformation and life. This group exhibition brings together some of the artists who, using different approaches and from varying aesthetic and conceptual angles, have worked on this theme in recent years.