

april 16  
6 p.m.

spring 2015

conversations  
at the edge  
experimental media series

# marisa olson in praise of garbage

2003–14, US, multiple formats, ca 60 min + discussion  
Marisa Olson in person!

Marisa Olson (1977, Augsburg, Germany) is an artist, writer, and media theorist. Her work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale; Centre Pompidou; Tate Modern, London; Tate Liverpool; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; New Museum, New York; Nam June Paik Art Center, Korea; British Film Institute; Sundance Film Festival; PERFORMA Biennial; and P.S. 122, New York. She has also written for numerous publications, served as longtime Editor and Curator at Rhizome, and curated programs at the Guggenheim Museum, New York; New Museum, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; White Columns, New York; and Artists Space, New York.

## program

### *The One That Got Away*

(2005, Video, Color, Sound, 9mins.)

Due to the heavy press coverage of Marisa's American Idol Audition Training Blog ([www.americanidolauditiontraining.blogs.com](http://www.americanidolauditiontraining.blogs.com)), the producers of the show were eager to follow me around during the course of several days of auditioning to be on American Idol. Ultimately, not one second of footage aired. I suspect this is because they eventually realized the nature of my parody. This fictional reenactment video dives into the reality tv format, crosscutting between real and simulated footage and exploring the participatory aspects of my project.

### *Dark Stars*

(2006, Video, B&W, Sound, 1 mins 30 secs.)

This video uses analog video processing techniques to performatively blend a classic image of Jean-Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol with a 1980s VHS video game. *Dark Stars* alludes to the shared vocabulary of celestial and pop stardom, and the synchronized death of stars and recording media. Recorded at the Experimental Television Center.

### *Black or White*

(2006, Video, B&W, Sound, 4 mins.)

In this video, I perform the act of listening to Michael Jackson's song, *Black or White*. The song's audio signals trigger shifts in the appearance of the video, thanks to the help of a "wobulator" built by Nam June

Paik. The piece was inspired by Jackson's original video for the song, in which characters' faces morphed into each other--the first moment in which I remember taking a deeper interest in digital effects. *Black or White* traces my ongoing interests in media change and the performative aspects of spectatorship. The new question, here, is about the similarities and differences between the ways that people and machines "hear." This work is part of my *Performed Listening* series. It was made at the Experimental Television Center.

### *Performed Listening: Boomerang (Screencap)*

(2008, Video, Color, Sound, 11 mins.)

An extension of my *Performed Listening* video & performance series, about the performativity of spectatorship, this two-channel video installation merges Richard Serra and Nancy Holt's *Boomerang* (1974) with my own YouTube response video to the work.

### *Double Bind (Screencap)*

(2010, Video, Color, Sound, 2 mins.)

Screencap of a two-channel, YouTube-based video performance loop. A double bind is commonly known as a paradox or conflicting set of demands. But it also has a specific meaning in the world of cybernetics, where it refers to messages that conflict with each other at different levels of meaning, making it difficult for the recipient to determine the nature of the paradox, to confront the inherent dilemma, or to escape the conflict. *Double Bind* is a two-channel internet video project involving two clips simultaneously and perpetually linked to each other as YouTube response videos. While the webcam-recorded clips clearly represent the before-and-after actions of me wrapping and unwrapping my head in pink vinyl bondage tape, their recursive linking and synced looping problematize their chronology. This perpetual feedback loop takes the word "tape" as a double entendre, as it plays back the tropes of early feminist video art, while venturing into the stickier, tapeless world of digital memes.

*continued on back »*

## upcoming

April 23 at 6p.m.

**Projections, Portraits, and Picaresques**



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Despite the cause and effect narrative structure embedded in the work, there is a glaring lack of motivation beyond the recitation and unraveling of these pre-recorded histories. *Double Bind* embodies a desire to both participate-in and critique cultural phenomena. My parallel research practice explores the ways in which the internet and other social media enable such forms of critical parody. In this case, I take on what I perceives as the relative "prohibition" of art history (its own form of pop), and explores the public platform of the internet as a viable site for cultural critique. Both channels of *Double Bind* are presented side-by-side on a dedicated webpage; however, behind this screen the videos are subject to the unanticipatable YouTube comments and response videos of a viewing public predominantly unaware and unconcerned about the work's status as art or its participation in art historical discourse. Relinquishing control over the reception of my work in this way is just as pleasurable to me as any of the more classical forms of masochism implied in the videos. Essentially binding myself to broader digital culture, the true impulse in my critique is a desire to pierce the confines of the white cube so as to engage more directly with participatory media. *Double Bind* therefore positions us between the false dilemmas of high and low culture or utopic and dystopic views of media culture.

### **Golden Oldies (Excerpt)**

(2006, Video, Color, Sound, 4 mins. 30 secs. of 32 mins)

In this performance, I attempted to instigate communication between a CD boombox, child's record player, and various defunct media: vinyl records, VHS tapes, cassette tapes, and CDs. Like the garbage that piles up as we upgrade our phones and computers, the detritus accumulated in these efforts gets blindly swept aside in this ultimately fruitless effort. Recorded at the Experimental Television Center, this performance was the genesis for an ongoing series of sculptural works under the heading of *Time Capsules*.



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