



EXHIBITION TOUR AND ARTISTS' TALK
(MAGNUS ERIKSSON AND GERALDINE JUÁREZ)
SAT 03 MAY 2014, 2PM

OPEN FRI TO SUN 11-6PM
SAT 03 MAY - SUN 08 JUNE 2014

Furtherfield is proud to present the first ever retrospective exhibition of Piratbyrån.

"For the last sixty years, capitalism has been running a pretty tight ship in the West. But in increasing numbers, pirates are hacking into the hull and the holes are starting to appear. Privately owned property, ideas, and privileges are leaking into the public domain beyond anyone's control." - Matt Mason, The Pirate's Dilemma

Piratbyrån and Friends traces the stories of cultural sharing and affinity-building among the activities and values of the members of Piratbyrån (The Bureau of Piracy). This Swedish artist/activist group was established in 2003 to promote the free sharing of information and culture. The exhibition presents screenings, installations and artworks by founding and more recent members, keen to tell the story of the group on their own terms. It features newly commissioned work by artists Geraldine Juárez and Evan Roth, and a new networked audio collaboration which mediates their rich archive and foregrounds the role of piracy as an agent of innovative disruption and cultural transmission.

"The specific character of friendship as a form of social relationship is that it does not presume a permanent interaction. Friendships are a type of serial solidarity. The story of friendship is a story of meetings." Viktor Misiano - The Institutionalization of Friendship.

Piratbyrån have always resisted clear definition. Created on the Internet as a loose friendship group with a shared commitment to media and piracy in the shifting ecologies of digital copyright law, Piratbyrån operated through a number of different identities. From the #discobedienti IRC chatroom, to the infamous Pirate Bay, to the determinedly analogue SX23 bus trip to Manifesta 7, and their subsequent disbandment in 2010, Piratbyrån consciously cultivated an air of mystery and intrigue around their many activities.

Piratbyrån have always had a particular commitment to the value of friendship as a shelter for culture and a space to understand, imagine and experiment as a community from the edges of the Internet.

EXHIBITED WORKS

The exhibition features newly commissioned sculptures and installations by artists James Cauty, Geraldine Juárez and Evan Roth and a screening programme that includes *Steal This Film* by Jamie King and *TPB AFK* by Simon Klose.

Kopimi Totem (2014) – Evan Roth

This specially commissioned sculpture by artist Evan Roth is made of hacked routers and represents the "artwork-network". Using their mobile devices gallery visitors can access an archive of books, images, diagrams and soundfiles produced by Piratbyrån, each located on different levels of a Wifi pyramid built of routers curated by Magnus Ericksson (founding member of Piratbyrån). The material on the routers is not openly available, just in this artwork/network - which is perversely localised and inaccessible via the web.

Tapcasts (2013-2014) – Piratbyrån and Friends

Through a series of self-recorded cassette tapes, Piratbyrån and their friends have created a living archive for this exhibition that tells the story of the group's history. The *Tapcasts* are conceived by Piratbyrån as "thought seeds" of the group. Piratbyrån sent the cassette tapes to people connected with the group and they added, modified and deleted recordings

on the tapes. The tapes were then sent on to the next person to interpret, add to or overwrite, and can be played in the *Torrent Tent* installation.



***Torrent Tent* (2014) – Geraldine Juárez**

Geraldine Juárez's *Torrent Tent* is a machine knitted tent creating a place where visitors can listen to the *Tapecasts* and watch her film about the history of Piratbyrån. The artist explains that the tent is about "pieces" that make up something bigger than a download or a community. The tent is made of lots of machine knitted squares with different images, text and grey zones that try to put together the torrent of her relationship with Piratbyrån - as friends, as inspirations, and as political ideals. The idea behind the tent is to make it a place to experience piracy on different levels.

***Riot Chat* (2014) – Palle Thorsson**

Occupy was right: we need to get rid of super managers holding the world down. Since revolutions constantly fail in the streets, we must simultaneously continue to riot the Internet. Here is *Riot Chat* - a Twitter-IRC-game remix. *Riot Chat* is an homage to kopimi (copyme), a symbol showing that you want to be copied, and a sandbox for an anti-surveillance communication protocol. Join us at <https://copyriot.meteor.com>. The *Occupy the Internet* remix, uses *OmniHAL* (2005-2014), the IRC Bot (Internet Relay Chat Bot) that has been logging the conversations/chats of Piratbyrån in IRC since 2005, to interact with the participants of the GIF riot.

Manifesta Bus Trip

As part of the European Biennale for Contemporary Art Manifesta 7, the members of Piratbyrån reached out to their virtual community and invited them to join them on a bus trip from Stockholm to Italy. Many of the group had never having met each other before in

real life and so the journey acted as a social experiment and workshop. The aim of the trip was to develop an analogue forum for the group and its members to reflect on the Scandinavian conflicts over copyright. Images, film footage and a knitted costume made on the bus are displayed as part of the exhibition.

S23m Manifesta Bus Trip (2008)

Piratbyrån and Friends

S23x Belgrade Bus trip (2008)

Piratbyrån and Friends

ARCHIVAL/CONTEXTUAL OBJECTS

***Smiley Riot Shield 2 (Second Edition) and PB2* (2014)**

– James Cauty

The appropriated shields are decorated with acid house smiley faces and follow a first edition of 3 made for Occupy London St Paul's Eviction 2012. Piratbyrån are great fans of the artist and in recognition of this connection, James Cauty has designed and produced a Piratbyrån shield for this exhibition.

Polymarchs Posters (1980-1990) – Jaime Ruelas

Courtesy El Proyecto Sonidero

Illustrator Jaime Ruelas captured the community around dance, music and technology, that the legendary mexican sound system Polymarchs created decades before music turned in "content" and music acted as an unifying force in a country where piracy has been always being a mode of existence.

***Sharing is Caring Map* (2008) – Sara Wolfert / Mathias Tervo / Piratbyrån**

***SK23 Suit* (2008) – Lina Persdotter Carlsson/ Piratbyrån**

Digital Archive (writtings, pictures, videos, press, oddities) (2003-2014) – Piratbyrån

T-Shirt Collection (2003-2010) – Piratbyrån

FILM PROGRAMME

Jamie King – *Steal this film*

Simon Klose – *TPB AFK*

Piratbyrån's films: *S23m* (2008), *S23k* (2008), *Four Shreddings and a Funeral* (2007), *Pirates of the Internet* (music video) (2008)

ABOUT PIRATBYRÅN

Piratbyrån (The Bureau for Piracy) was started by a bunch of hacking, coding, reading, listening, philosophising, clubbing, rioting, carding, chatting, loving, slacking people in 2003 as an antidote to Hollywood's representatives in Sweden - Antipiratbyrån.

In 2007 - after having kickstarted the Swedish debate over file-sharing, which by the time had become a major issue in the previous year's national election and after having created The Pirate Bay as a side-project that became the world largest file-sharing system - the people from Piratbyrån had grown tired of the file-sharing debate and its endless repetitions of for-or-against, legal-or-illegal, payment-or-gratis. At the last day of April in a Walpurgis fire on the top of the highest mountain in Stockholm the masked members burned the remaining copies of a book on file-sharing they had published some years earlier and declared the debate dead. The video documentation of this ritual, set to the soundtrack of KLF's "What Time is Love", found its way to the Indian Raqs Media Collective group who was just about to curate the next Manifesta



biennial in Bolzano, Italy.

The loose network of Piratbyrån, now loaded with 7000 Euros of art budget and a sizable amount of cash from selling Pirate Bay t-shirts, decided to purchase, renovate and decorate a 1970s city bus, stack it with 23 people, and head down south.

The ongoing relation with the bus - named S23m/x/k respectively for each trip - would later make an exodus from the exhibition in Italy to head across Eastern

Europe and end up at the trial against Pirate Bay. It became one of the most significant undertakings of Piratbyrån and shaped their thoughts on the tensions between digital abundance and crowded space, collective decisions and freedom of choice, and that which can be copied and that which can't. The bus became a line of flight from the collective subject that had been built, a subject which was very associated with The Pirate Bay and also with Swedish politics, including the Pirate Party.

While nothing was really the same after the bus had returned, Piratbyrån formally lasted until 2009, when the tragic death of one of the founding members - Ibi Kopimi Botani - defined the end of an era. The Internet had already transitioned to another phase and it is not until now, and enough time has passed, that we as a culture are ready to reflect on what exactly happened during those years.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

James Cauty

For Piratbyrån, activist and artist James Cauty's personal work resonates with the themes of abundance and rarity, presence and absence, functionality and waste, control and chaos, and draws on the same symbolic language that mixes clarity with suggestion. There is also a similar urge to *stir things up* and *stick ones nose where it doesn't belong*.

Evan Roth

Speaking of stirring things up, FATLAB was for Piratbyrån another one of those instantly recognisable friends that had never met; the art group that Piratbyrån never became, the "the unsolicited viral marketing wing of the open-source movement", the graffiti crew of the World Wide Web. FATLAB was born when the file-sharing debate was buried and the new web 2.0 era transformed the web.

Evan Roth, co-founder of FATLAB, has made a piece for the exhibition that in a subtle but direct way captures the concept of KOPIMI; how meetings and connections leave traces and makes you a carrier of ideas and information, sometimes without you even recognising it.

Jaime Ruelas & Polymarchs

The soundsystem collective Polymarchs and their illustrator Jaime Ruelas, probably happily unaware of the existence of Piratbyrån, embodies a scene in Mexico where piracy has always been a way of life and a mode of existence. They have materialised, expressed and lived what was only hinted at in glowing screens up in Sweden. Having outlasted all of the above mentioned collectives and managed to stick together for decades, they also highlight both the potential strength and - as a contrast - the fragility of so called “confidential projects”; those moments when friendships turn into expressive units and the borders between the intimate and the public are blurred.

Geraldine Juárez

Last but not least, Geraldine Juárez is the reason this exhibition came together at all. She began to read the Swedish-language blogs of Piratbyrån members through Google Translate - whose mistranslations made them sound like they came from the near future instead of the near past, until she finally came into contact with Piratbyrån by translating updates from the trial - or Spectrial, as it was known - into Spanish. Now she returns the favour of time-travelling by re-awakening Piratbyrån one last time, to allow their archive to again live up, their ideas to be carried over to others and perhaps even some sense made from what happened, although these things can only be interpreted, misunderstood and re-appropriated - never explained.

Inside the tent that she has crafted for the exhibition - a torrent for piracy as the last shelter of culture - there will be a collection of tapes prepared and circulated by Piratbyrån and friends, perhaps giving some seed for thoughts and guidance in the process of excavating the archive of Piratbyrån.

ABOUT THE CO-CURATOR RACHEL FALCONER

Rachel Falconer is a curator, writer and producer working at the intersections of technology, the media and contemporary art. She currently holds the position of Head of Art and Technology at SPACE and runs the art and technology programme at The White Building and SPACE MediaLab. She is Co-Editor at Furtherfield and a founding member of the collective Hardcore Software.

Her curatorial practice is hybrid and interdisciplinary in approach and her current activity and research focuses on the pathologies surrounding social spaces and human behaviours engaged with networks and new technologies.

ABOUT FURTHERFIELD

Furtherfield is the UK's leading organisation for arts, technology and social change. Since 1997 Furtherfield has created online and physical spaces and places for people to come together to develop and create critical experimental art and digital technologies on their own terms. Furtherfield Gallery and Commons are based in the heart of London's Finsbury Park. This serves as a hub to connect and activate local and international communities of artists, technologists, thinkers and doers. www.furtherfield.org

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