Identify! Or Studies on the Political Subject
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST AND NOTES

SAT 23 OCTOBER, 2004
66 West 12th Street, 4th Floor
New York, New York
Free admission

Identify! or Studies on the Political Subject is a one day-long installation of projected images and sound slides, videos, 16mm film, and FM radio that investigates the relationship between individuals and the state. In a political environment with systems of inclusion and exclusion (on the level of community, government as well as history) that have been polemically simplified and emotionally charged, these works engage the political subject in its complex and multilayered existences, as discourse, as experience, as claim, as trace, and as action and non-action.

With works by **Yael Bartana** (Netherlands/Israel), **Sabine Bitter/Helmut Weber** (Vancouver/Vienna), **Matthew Buckingham** (Berlin/New York),**Andrea Geyer** (New York), **Sharon Hayes** (New York), **Ashley Hunt**(Los Angeles), **Lana Lin** (New York), **neuroTransmitter** (New York),**Jesal Kapadia** (New York), **Katya Sander** (Copenhagen), **Klaus Weber** (Berlin), and **Florian Wüst** (Berlin/Rotterdam)

This event is presented as part of the Vera List Center's program cycle on "Homeland."

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST AND NOTES
Rooms from left to right, #403 to #407

<u>403</u>
Ashley Hunt
A World Map in Which…
installation with map and video: 18 minutes

"Social Death," as described by sociologist Orlando Patterson, is the exclusion of certain persons or groups of persons from the social sphere, an effective "death" that disqualifies them from the rights, protections, and privileges of "proper persons," thus allowing for their subjugation. Today, such matters appear to hinge on questions of statehood; citizenship, political enfranchisement, and other juridical, political, and geographic means of exclusion. **Ashley Hunt**'s *A World Map in Which…* presents a dual mapping of contemporary forms of "statelessness" where prisoner and refugee populations both speak to notions of domination. **(installation with map and video: 18 min)**

<u>404</u>
Matthew Buckingham
Muhheakantuck, Everything Has a Name
16mm film: 40 min.
SCREENING at 1pm and 3pm

Indigenous people of the Hudson River Valley are among the earliest in North America to have been displaced from their land by European colonizers. Yet most published histories of New York and the Hudson Valley dedicate less than a dozen pages to

representing indigenous experience in the region. **Matthew Buckingham**'s 2004 *Muhheakantuck, Everything Has a Name* examines the brief but disastrous period when the Lene Lenape of the lower Hudson area came into contact with the corporate entity known as the Dutch West India Company. **(16mm film: 40 min, screened at 1pm and 3pm)**

405
Yael Bartana
Trembling Time
video loop: 3 minutes

406
Yael Bartana
Profile
video loop: 6:20 minutes

In the context of contemporary Israel, **Yael Bartana**'s work observes the complicated relationship of an individual to state-prescribed collective commemoration (in *Trembling Time*) and to military service (in *Profile*). Both situations, in their state-ordered repetition and ritual, point to the contested space of individual consciousness within the militarization of Israel's national self-understanding. **(video loop: 6:20 minutes, video loop: 3 minutes)**

Sabine Bitter and **Helmut Weber**
23 de Enero
video: 23 minutes, Spanish with English subtitles

In their recent video project *Living Megastructures,* realized in Caracas, Venezuela, **Sabine Bitter** and **Helmut Weber** interviewed Caraqueños about the everyday functions of two dominating structures; the new Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the unregulated, informal urbanism of public housing project *23 de Enero,* a historically and politically important feature of Caracas. By considering both the state constitution and public housing as megastructures, the artists introduce new spatial and social relations to challenge the limits of appropriation and everyday use. Encouraged by the constitution, revolutionary architectural practices have altered the program of the Venezuelan Modernism, opening up greater social participation and articulating local community organizations within the state apparatus. **(video: 23 min, Spanish with English subtitles)**

Sharon Hayes
My Fellow Americans (1981 – 1988)
video: 5:30 minutes

Sharon Hayes' newest work, *After Before,* is a semi-fictional, semi-documentary video piece based on interviews with people on the streets of New York City that investigates the pronouncement and production of "public opinion" in the months leading up to the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election. **(video: 20 min)**

Lana Lin
Taiwan Video Club
No Power to Push Up the Sky

video: 14 minutes, video: 23 minutes

In *Taiwan Video Club* **Lana Lin** explores her mother's relationship to narrative traditions of her homeland of Taiwan. Like members of other immigrant communities, her mother tapes and trades popular television shows and movies from her home country, in her case Taiwan. Stories that were once passed on from mouth to mouth are now passed on from VCR to VCR. The title of Lana Lin's second video, *No Power to Push Up the Sky,* is a literal translation of the political slogan that 23-year old student leader Chai Ling wrote on her clothes during the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square. By analyzing acts of translation as interpretive acts produced from multiple vantage points, the video calls attention to the subjective motivations underlying any understanding of history and demonstrates the complex process of locating meaning across language, culture, and politics. **(video: 14 minutes, video: 23 min)**

Jesal Kapadia
Marking
Woman Flying
video: a loop of 2 minutes, video: a loop of 2:25 minutes

Jesal Kapadia's recent animations deal with the presence and non-presence of an immigrant body. In *Marking*, a continuous loop of still images featuring evidence of an invisible person playing a game, neutral space becomes a ghostly environment haunted by the signs of a missing body. The act of negative marking, whether by effacement or by remaining invisible, emerges as an issue of both aesthetic form and psychic life. In *Woman Flying*, a camera captures an Indian woman's image as she hovers in mid-air just above the ground. She is within and between two places at once, represented as a dangling, frantic, and hysterical body, drawing attention to the breath-taking moments between jumping and falling. **(video: a loop of 2 min, video: a loop of 2 min 25 sec)**

Katya Sander
Someone to Watch Over Me
video: 5 minutes

Katya Sander's video *Someone to Watch Over Me* documents an unspecified intrusion into an apartment, addressing language, ideology, and imagination of Hollywood cinema in relation to issues of fear, desire, invasion and security. **(video: 5 min)**

Klaus Weber
Demo Inverse, Berlin 21.12.2002
video: 60 minutes

Klaus Weber's *Demo Inverse, Berlin 21.12.2002* documents a demonstration without demonstrators that took place across six unpopulated but politically significant locations in Berlin. Two elements constituted the march; a police vehicle (obliged by law to accompany officially registered demonstrations) and a sedan with a loudspeaker mounted on its top. A mixture of text and song concerned with relations between space, subjectivity, and authority played through the megaphone. **(video: 60 min)**

Florian Wüst
Protecting Freedom Until There Is No Freedom Left (Studies on the Political Subject #1), video: 16 minutes

Florian Wüst's *Protecting Freedom Until There Is No Freedom Left (Studies on the Political Subject #1),* which lent the title to this event, is one element of Wuest's ongoing investigation of the relationship between the subject and the state. The artist defines it as a relationship that constantly changes under the productive pressures of renegotiation and reassessment precisely because the defining power of the state tends to treat language and signs as malleable material. Under these conditions, discourse is likely to turn into doctrine. Confronted with this contradictory social dynamic the political subject finds itself tragically trapped between affirmation and resistance, between loyalty and security risk, especially in times of (alleged) internal and external threats or on the eve of new technological developments with unforeseeable consequences for humanity. *Protecting Freedom Until There Is No Freedom Left* combines staged scenes based on excerpts from the J. Robert Oppenheimer hearing and witness testimonies before the Personnel Security Board of the Atomic Energy Commission, Washington 1954. Oppenheimer, who has often been called the father of the atom bomb, later refused to support the hydrogen bomb program of the U.S. government. Following this refusal he was accused of being a communist and subsequently lost his security clearance and official advisory positions. **(video: 16 min)**

407
Andrea Geyer
Parallax
8-chanel slide projection: 50 minutes

Staged within the political and social climate of New York and Los Angeles in the summer of 2003, **Andrea Geyer**'s *Parallax* investigates the notions of 'citizenship' and 'national belonging' in the U.S. Images of a female protagonist in an urban environment are juxtaposed with images of and excerpts from actual newspaper articles that document recent political rallies staged against the foreign and national policies of the current administration. **(8-chanel slide projection: 50 minutes)**

In the Hallways:

neuroTransmitter
The Low Power to High Power Broadcast Media Tour
sound: 14 minute loop

The work of the collaborative **neuroTransmitter** establishes a relationship between FM radio technology and the body. It looks at how the moving body—in connection with and directed by radio broadcasts—can negotiate, perform, and sonically map urban space. For *Identify!*, neuroTransmitter will broadcast a sound work generated from field recordings collected during the protests of the Republican National Convention in New York to local radios. Included are excerpts of *The Low Power to High Power Broadcast Media Tour*, a mobile, micro-radio sonic intervention neuroTransmitter performed during the convention. Generated by roving public performance, the use of props and frequency activation, the work connects global media empires based in Manhattan (focusing on the consolidated print-film-television-radio-magazine-book-music conglomerates), their corporate influence on deregulation of FCC policy, and their close affiliations with conservative politics.**(sound: 14 minute loop)**