



PHYLLIS BALDINO

SALLÉ GILBERT-GAILLARD & CHAPELLE DE L'HÔPITAL GENERAL

Nothing from the future

Installation created during residency at

VIDEOFORMES with the help of **Clermont
Auvergne Métropole** as part of his creation
politic, and the support of **Drac Auvergne-
Rhône-Alpes** / 2018.

Co-production **Phyllis Baldino** /
VIDEOFORMES

Nine-channel wireless synced installation,
2013-2016

Color/sound

27 minutes and 23 secondes

28 frames per channel

Special thanks: **Paul Pacun, vablet.com,**
the makers of Signage.

Subtitles in french: **VIDEOFORMES**, with
Laura Bertrand, Issam Bendehina,
**Kelly Cornu, Raphael Goutte, Farida
Kaddour, Edouard Seve,** Master Traduction
Audiovisuelle **Daniel Rodrigues & Gabriel
Soucheyre, LCC, Université Clermont
Auvergne.**

Nothing from the Future was inspired by the idea that there will always be predictions about the future, but it is in the everyday where nothing happens on a regular basis. Sure, there are certain days that are more extraordinary than others, but on the whole, one day resembles the next. What constitutes this “nothing” is what I am after: creating every-day actions set in an undetermined time in the future. “You won’t believe what happened to me today! You just won’t believe it! Absolutely nothing!”¹

Over three years in the making, *Nothing from the Future* is similar to other works I have developed that involve a process that evolves over time, requiring extensive research. I do all of my own pre-production with set-up shots created with props and personas, production, and post-production, audio and video recording, and editing.

Nothing from the Future is a nine-channel synchronized wireless video installation with

¹ - Krauss, Lawrence M., *A Universe From Nothing*, 2012, p. 121 (quoting Richard Feynman)



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Bluetooth speakers. I've always dreamt of making a video installation that is completely wireless. Working with the Apple Business Team helped this all come together. All of the components are self-contained: no internet is needed. The footage is on iPads, installed floating in a 14-foot circle, with the moving images parallel but not facing each other. The small round Bluetooth speakers also float from the ceiling, one per channel. There are 60 segments total, 35 short clips, and 25 silent moving abstractions. This silent footage was shot in real time, without added animation in post-production. It offers an alternate version of the future. One clip with audio plays at a time while the other eight channels play the silent abstractions. The

channels are randomly synchronized, but appear like they are not synchronized.

The shoots range from domestic and occupational settings, to observations; it is as if these personas and actions were a regular occurrence. Sound has emerged as a major component of the work. Audio, in its various forms, only becomes more prevalent in our lives. From beeps to pings, bells, whooshes, songs, voices: it is endless. I combine the initial location sound recordings with additional audio from a variety of sources.

The viewer may or may not see a clip depending on where they are in the space. They may hear the audio in the distance but not be near the footage associated with



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that audio. Unpredictable and unsettling, the experience will make the viewer feel fragmented in a manner not dissimilar to the bombardment of information we receive from our technological devices on a daily basis. They are left to imagine how this phenomenon may accelerate in the future.

For my concept of a futuristic landscape, I chose to shoot in the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. It is a surreal version of what lies ahead. I wondered what it would be like to live there in the future. What would happen?

Now is here

Single-channel installation, 18'58, color/
sound, 2017

French subtitles: **VIDEOFORMES**, with contribution by **Roxane Delage** & Master Média et Médiation Culturelle : **Leisha Lecointre, Daniel Rodrigues, Pauline Azevedo, Sacha Limoizin, Amélie Rolland**, under the direction of **Gabriel Soucheyre**, UFR LCC, **Université Clermont Auvergne**.

In the fall of 2016, I read *Time Reborn* by the theoretical physicist Lee Smolin. Lee is in my piece about symmetry symmetry about



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(2002). We have stayed in touch over the years and he recommended that I read this particular book of his. The idea of time has always fascinated me. Some of my previous work deals directly with concepts about time. In the introduction to *Time Reborn*, Lee states, "Every journey has a lesson to teach, and mine has been to realize just how radical an idea is contained in the simple statement that time is real. Having begun my life in science searching for the equation beyond time, I now believe that the deepest secret of the universe is that its essence rests in how it unfolds moment to moment in time."²

After reading Smolin's book, I decided to make a video about the idea of 'now'. As timing would have it, the American presidential election in November resulted in a reality television star entering the White House. I consciously did not include the

name, voice, or likeness of our new President. Although he is not literally represented, he exists in other manifestations. As it turns out, my first pre-planned trip to Cuba was in January. Both the United States and Cuba are going through an unprecedented moment in history. All of these factors came into play when creating "*Now is Here*."

I started production in January by filming the hands of others as they spoke about their definition of 'now.' Shooting hands was a way of making people less self-conscious. I wanted this process to be easy for them and abstract for me. There was one rule: no proper nouns. It was important to simply record their thoughts without including particular names of people or things. The twenty-five individuals I chose were from various occupations. Their definitions of 'now' range from personal to philosophical

2 - Smolin, Lee, "*Time Reborn*," 2013.



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to political.

The Cubans were amazingly open to participate even though we had just met. Eloisa Hernández Janeiro was a simultaneous interpreter for Fidel Castro, and also for Presidents Obama and Carter when they visited Cuba. Eloisa is naturally insightful. Elías Aseff Alfonso, an Afro-Cuban guide in Havana, is uniquely genuine, open, and direct. Other participants include René Gonzalez: a Cuban Historical Guide, Alexander Gonzalez (René's younger brother), Reinier Menendez (Guide/Programmer at the Martin Luther King Center in Havana), Solveig Font (fine art curator), Julio Llópiz-Casal (visual artist), and Hanser Ponce Blanco (my Airbnb host).

The people I filmed back home in New York ranged from fellow visual artists (Mark Harris, Nate Heiges, Pam Lins, Robin Lowe, Halsey Rodman, Kathleen Ruiz, Amy Sillman,

Katie Vida), to the doorman of a small condominium building in Greenwich Village (Keion Bryant), to a young aspiring flutist (Jonah Murphy). The political landscape here in the U.S. was rapidly changing on a daily if not hourly basis. It was — and is — non-stop. During production I was constantly filming my television with my iPhone, to acquire footage of these events. It was not about the quality of this documentation but about the content and commentary associated with it. Interspersed with the hand-held footage are various forms of current event activity, altered as needed. The former Press Secretary Sean Spicer is featured in various iterations. Instead of using his false statements about the crowd size at the 2017 Presidential Inauguration, I included the Obama swearing in clip from my piece *Finally* (2009), showing the mass exuberance on the National Mall.

The Bowling Green Massacre was a fake



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news story fabricated by Kellyanne Conway, Counselor to the President. Coincidentally there is a Bowling Green Park in lower Manhattan. It is the oldest park in New York City. When I arrived there to film, I discovered the perfect surprise: New Yorkers had created a memorial with real flowers and cards around the historical plaque of the park. It was the ultimate scene for my shoot there. The story was not true but New Yorkers understand all too well the reality we are living in.

Phyllis Baldino (USA)

Phyllis Baldino is american artist, in residence at VIDEOFORMES en 2017/2018 (with the support of Clermont Auvergne Métropole as part of its creation policy, and Drac Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes).

One of my fondest memories as an art student is sitting alone in a small library booth

with just a turntable and large headphones listening to John Cage and David Tudor's sound collaboration piece *Indeterminacy* (1959). Their composition was so many things, yet so simple — funny, smart, quirky, beautiful, surprising, engaging, random, straight forward and more — it changed my idea of art forever. Cage set up rules for the work: he had to speak each story within one minute, Tudor was in another room unaware of when Cage spoke or what he was saying. Although not planned and totally random, the result is astonishingly perfect. Taking this lead, I sometimes create simple rules for my pieces where I allow chance to play a role.

I have been working primarily with the moving image since 1993. At the time, I received a BFA in sculpture, my work was very process-orientated. When I was living in Los Angeles in the early 1990s, as fate would have it, I was given a Sony Handycam 8mm

video camera as a gift. As soon as I starting filming, that was it: the device was like an extension of my hand. Now that my hand was the camera, shooting the process became the piece. I began to make videos that dealt with the function, physicality, and transformation of every day objects.

The work is conceptually-based and often sparked by scientific information or philosophical ideas. Some examples:

Gray Area Series (1993-1994): a response to Fuzzy Logic³, something being “what it is” and “what it is not” simultaneously; the *Unknown Series* (excerpts) (1994-1996), unknown objects altered by unknown personas; *Nano-cadabra* (1998), manual abstractions sprouting from nanotechnology; *Baldino-Neutrino* (2003), the neutrino experiments from CERN to Gran Sasso Lab in Italy; *Out of Focus Everything Series* (2006-2010), multi-dimensional moving images about the Theory of Everything; *TraitFee* (2012), personal information appears on your body if you do not pay your TraitFee.

phyllisbaldino.com

3 - McNeill, Daniel and Freiburger, Paul, *Fuzzy Logic: The Discovery of a Revolutionary Computer Technology – and How it is Changing the World*, 1993