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NEWS RELEASE

MIT List Visual Arts Center presents
The Otolith Group:
The Otolith Trilogy

September 6–22, 2011
Bakalar Gallery

Related Program:
Members of The Otolith Group in Conversation with TJ Demos
Friday, October 21, 7PM, Bartos Theatre



still from *Otolith III* HD video (colour, sound) 48min UK 2009 © The Otolith Group and LUX

Cambridge, MA–August, 2011. The MIT List Visual Arts Center is pleased to present The Otolith Group's *Otolith Trilogy* an interconnected series of films made between 2002 and 2009 that relate scenarios of a speculative future, projected from events in our recent past. Combining fictional narration with archival and documentary footage, the artists create a set of plausible predictive outcomes for the future, from life in the city of the future, to the 22nd Century, when the earth is no longer hospitable to life. The three films *Otolith I*, *Otolith II*, and *Otolith III* show the possible effects of our past and present actions on various aspects of human experience and knowledge, including biology, space travel, urbanism, architecture, economics, media, and culture.

Otolith I (22:16 min.) is set in the 22nd Century, when the human race is no longer able to survive on Earth and is obliged to live in the microgravity conditions of the International Space Station. Dr. Usha Adebaran Sagar, the future descendent of Otolith Group member Anjalika Sagar, is an exo-anthropologist researching life on an earth that she can experience only through media archives. *Otolith I* imagines a mutant future that looks to the past to find the commonality between the post-war non-alignment movement in South Asia and the USSR, and the 2003 protests against the invasion of Iraq. *Otolith I* began in November 2002 as a collaboration with artist Richard Couzins. It was completed in 2003 with the support of The Arts Catalyst and The Mir Consortium, which made it possible for the artists to film in a microgravity environment.

Otolith II (47:42 min.) is set in the near future and mixes fiction, archival material, and documentary footage filmed in Mumbai and Chandigarh. The film explores the affective pressure exerted upon inhabitants residing within contrasting and competing versions of the city of tomorrow. *Otolith II* investigates the politics of futurity in which predictive models of the masterplan, the corporate scenario, and real estate speculation converge to extract labor, convert attention, and capture potential for profit. *Otolith II* was commissioned in 2006 by the

Kunsten Festival Des Arts and ARGOS Centre for Art and Media in Brussels, Belgium, and Casco Projects in Utrecht, Netherlands.

Otolith III (48 min.) takes *The Alien*, the unrealized screenplay of the legendary Bengali director Satyajit Ray, as its point of departure. Written in 1967, *The Alien* would have been the first science fiction film to be set in contemporary India. *Otolith III* returns to 1967 to propose an alternative trajectory in which the fictional protagonists of *The Alien* attempt to seize the means of production in order to create the conditions for their existence as images. Filmed in London, *Otolith III* is an experiment in temporal and geographical displacement that The Otolith Group calls a premake, a remake of a film before the original. *Otolith III* was completed in 2009.

Members of The Otolith Group will participate in a conversation with art historian and critic TJ Demos. The Otolith Group will discuss the current conditions of politically engaged filmmaking and documentary representation. This program will take place Friday, October 21, 7PM Bartos Theatre. The program is organized by Scott Berzofsky with support from the MIT Program in Art, Culture, and Technology (ACT) and the Council for the Arts at MIT (CAMIT).

About the Artists: The Otolith Group is an artist-led organization founded in 2002 by Anjalika Sagar (b. 1968) and Kodwo Eshun (b. 1966) that integrates film, video, artists' writing, workshops, exhibitions, publications and public programs. The Group's research-based projects combine narrative, archival material, and documentary footage. Centered on close readings of the image in contemporary society, their work explores the legacies and potentialities of the document, the essay film, and the archive, as well as speculative futures and science fictions. They have organized numerous workshops, discussions, and exhibitions, including the touring exhibition *The Ghosts of Songs: A Retrospective of The Black Audio Film Collective 1982-1998*, at FACT Liverpool, UK, *Harun Farocki. 22 Films: 1968-2009* at Tate Modern, UK, and the film program *Protest*, which toured venues throughout the United Kingdom and was conceived as part of the *Essentials: The Secret Masterpieces of Cinema*, commissioned by the Independent Cinema Office. The Otolith Group were nominated for the Turner Prize in 2010. Their exhibition on Jean Genet is on view at The Nottingham Contemporary in Nottingham, UK, from July 16 to October 2, 2011.

Otolith Group: The Otolith Trilogy is organized by Joao Ribas, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

Support for the *Otolith Group: The Otolith Trilogy* has been provided by the Council for the Arts at MIT and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.



Directions: The MIT List Visual Arts Center is located in the Wiesner Building, 20 Ames St., at the eastern edge of the MIT campus. It is in close proximity to Kendall Square, Memorial Drive, and the Longfellow Bridge.

By T, take the red line to the Kendall/MIT stop, follow Main St. west to Ames St., turn left, and walk one block to the cross walk. The MIT List Visual Arts Center housed in a building identifiable by its white gridded exterior, will be on your left. Signage is on the building.

By car, coming across the Longfellow Bridge or from Memorial Drive, follow signs for Kendall Square. Limited metered parking is available on Ames Street. A parking garage is located at the Cambridge Center complex (entrance on Ames between Main and Broadway) during business hours and on campus after business hours and on weekends.

Gallery Hours: 12-6PM, Daily

Information: 617.253.4680 or <http://listart.mit.edu>

All exhibitions at the MIT List Visual Arts Center are free and open to the public. Wheelchair accessible. Accommodations are provided by request. Please call Mark Linga at 617.452.3586 for inquiries.