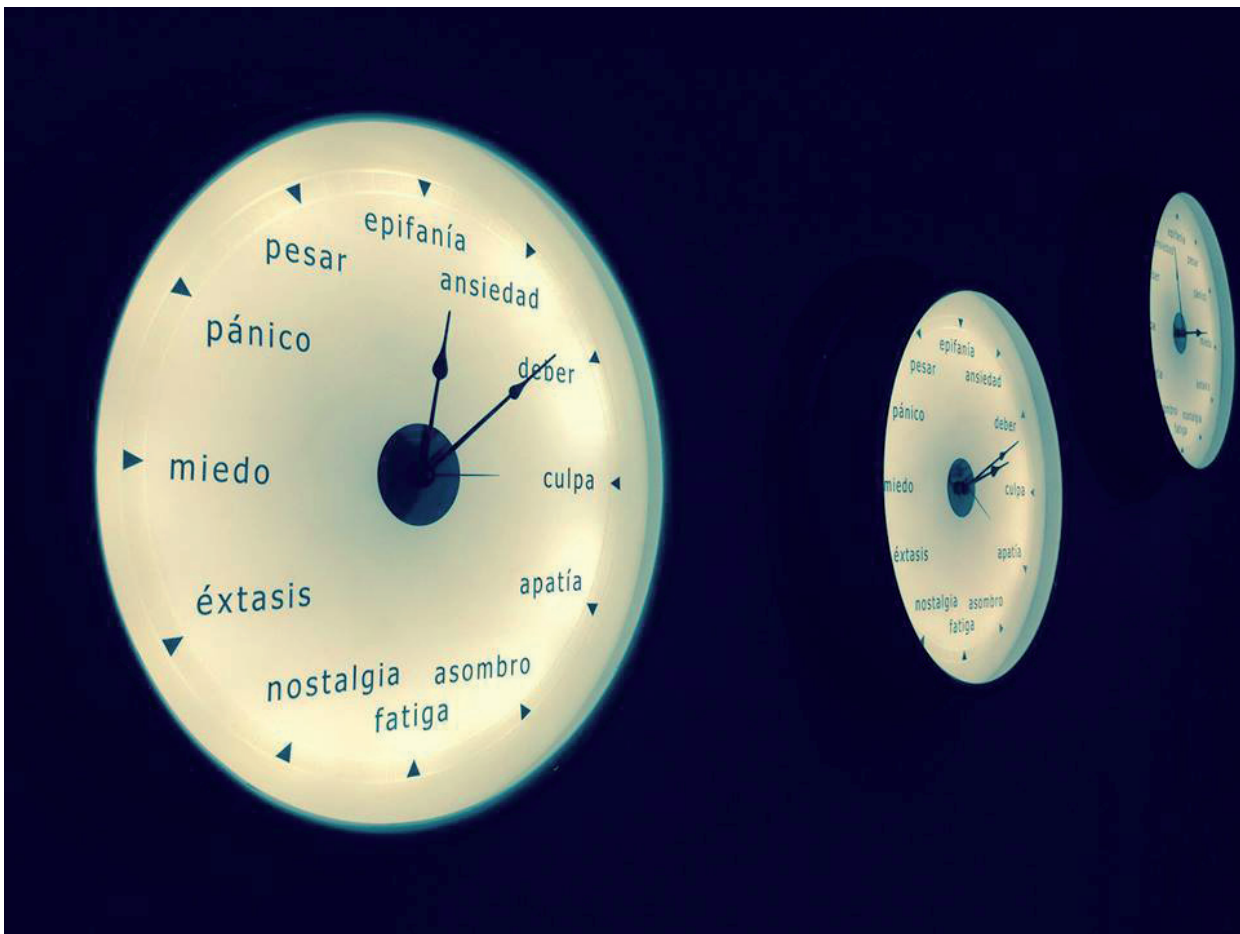


PRESS KIT

RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE. IT'S POSSIBLE BECAUSE IT'S POSSIBLE 12 JUN — 19 OCT 2014



Now, Elsewhere (Escapement), 2009-2014

CA2M 

Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo
Comunidad de Madrid

Co-produce



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INFORMATION

EXHIBITION

Title	<i>Raqs Media Collective. It's posible because is posible</i>
Organized by	CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo Comunidad de Madrid
Curators	Ferran Barenblit and Cuauhtémoc Medina
Dates	12 jun — 19 oct 2014
Opening	11 jun 20:00 h.
Catalogue	Include <i>Cosmopolitan Patience</i> , a dialogue between Ferran Barenblit and Cuauhtémoc Medina, and <i>Script from The Capital of Accumulation</i> , by Raqs Media Collective
Artists	Raqs Media Collective: Jeebesh Bagchi (1966), Monica Narula (1969) y Shuddhabrata Sengupta (1968)

CA2M

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PRESENTATION

CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, in Madrid, is putting together the first ever exhibition in Spain of the Indian group, Raqs Media Collective. Curated by Ferran Barenblit and Cuauhtémoc Medina, the show bears the title *It's possible because it's possible* and analyzes the effects of global capitalism, showing up the impositions of a system that apparently offers no alternatives or spaces for imagination. The exhibition, which includes over twenty pieces, will be open to the public in Madrid from June 12, will travel to Mexico in March 2015 and to Argentina, in Fundación PROA.

Raqs is a thought laboratory which takes aesthetics as the starting-point for social and political reflection. The origin of its name refers to both the word used in Persian, Arabic and Urdu to refer to meditation, and to the English acronym for "rarely asked questions" (RAQs). Through a plurality of roles, the members of Raqs take on the guise of artists, curators and "philosophical agent provocateurs" -as they like to define themselves -.

The group, based in New Delhi, was created in 1992 by Jeebesh Bagchi (1966), Monica Narula (1969) and Shuddhabrata Sengupta (1968). At present, the group is involved in installations and performances, as well as editorial, curatorship and educational projects approached through different areas such as sociology, geography, mathematics, industrial design and urbanism. Always drawing on an imprecise poetry, Raqs Media Collective analyses the past, mulls over the present and imagines the future.

CONTENT

It's possible because it's possible brings together a series of pieces by Raqs Media Collective, an artistic group created in 1992 by Jeebesh Bagchi (1966), Monica Narula (1969) and Shuddhabrata Sengupta (1968). Located in New Dehli, Raqs Media Collective, is a thinking laboratory that uses the aesthetic as a starting point for social and political reflection. At present, the Raqs collective carries out installations and performances, as well as editorial, curatorial and educational projects through different approaches such as sociology, geography, mathematics, industrial design or urbanism. The origin of its name refers both to the word used in Persian, Arabic and Urdu to define a state of meditation, and to the acronym in English «Rarely Asked Questions», a wordplay with the better-known FAQs «Frequently Asked Questions»- that we find on so many websites.

«It's possible because it's possible» is an irrefutable statement against a defeatist determinism. This title becomes an appeal or a sort of manifest. Contrary to the non-determination of *I would prefer not to* expressed by Melville in his work *Bartleby the scrivener*, «It's possible because it's possible» is a categorical, almost imperative, statement on the possibility of going from potential to action. For the Raqs collective, possible and probable are distant concepts: that which is imagined might happen, because, in fact, it is already happening once stated. A possibility that breaks away from many of the certainties we generally accept unthinkingly and which lead us along the labyrinth of hegemonic thinking. In line with this, the exhibition analyses the work of Raqs Media Collective as one of the possibilities of practice, criticism and invention, while also constituting a live refutation of a certain determinism that we appear to be set on. This «possibility» also becomes a call to action against the apparent obligation to accept impositions, whether resignedly or not.

In Raqs Media Collective there is a will to extend the universe of discourse by creating tools through imagination and speculation in order to create new ways of thinking and experiencing. Each work, each allegory, each reflection and each image and artefact created by Raqs represents an impulse that is currently necessary: to prevent criticism from being confused with complaints and impotence, to challenge the logic that is perceived and prevails in the world as if predestined, in spite of being closed and worn out, just because we live in an apparently triumphant system.

One of the most prominent axes of the exhibition is the question of time, or in other words, how the sequence of events is organised and the systematic regularisation between work, rest and leisure in modern-day society. In capitalism, time is a fundamental notion, as it is possibly the only exchangeable currency with a sure value. A value that is directly related to our condition as mortals, meaning therefore, that it is a finite asset.

In the work of Raqs, time is the battlefield that takes place in the body of each worker, as their time is divided between work and leisure, on consuming stimulants such as coffee or tea to survive or adapt to the production machine. For example, the clocks in *Now, Elsewhere (Escape-ment)*, 2009-2014, explore a division of the day according to hours of affection and desire, and leave the subordination of our organic and emotional lives to a time segmented by mechanical and abstract measures on hold. Similarly, in *Revoltage*, 2010, time is not an abstract and therefore inoffensive dimension, but rather the scene of the class struggle on both its microscopic level and in planetary terms. In *Time Symposium*, 2012, Raqs sets the public and the participants

the task of reflecting on the vast body of literature and critical texts available that speak of the transient nature of contemporary culture; in fact, it is the underlying theme in the diversity of observations, slogans, illuminations and jokes compiled in *Blackboard Economy*, 2014.

One of the key pieces of the exhibition is *The Capital of Accumulation*, 2010, a narrative-film in which Raqs Media Collective inverts the title of the most important study by Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of capital*, written in 1913. Luxemburg, apart from being an icon of an alternative democratic revolutionary left wing, constitutes an example of the possibilities of creative, non-dogmatic, thinking. She claims that capitalism is the first and only economy that «tends to swallow the world whole, while eradicating the rest of the economies, without tolerating any rivals by its side». *The Accumulation of Capital* is a discourse based on Luxemburg's legacy and it arises from the voices, the matter, the territory and the experiences, as well as the social communities that are domesticated by a dominant system.

In *Marks*, 2010, a work created for the Oscar Niemeyer building that is the headquarters of the French Communist Party, Raqs uses inversion as a technique as well as a form of irony, to give new meaning to one of the most used and abused symbols in history, the hammer and the sickle, reconverted here into signs of surprise and questioning. *Reverse Engineering the Euphoria Machine*, 2008, shows how, through the advertising device, and the seduction game inherent to it, a desire for possession and temporary satisfaction is generated that is mistaken for false happiness. A relationship that generates and feeds the impersonal network of the global economy.

Another of the underlying themes of the project is post-colonisation. What does to be cosmopolitan mean as opposed to being colonised? Both concepts appear to drink from the same source, the idea that a condition exists that is determined by the mere fact of belonging to (any) human group. In line with this conviction that all human beings form part of the same community, we run the risk of being flattened by a global capitalism that gives a new significance to the differences on an exclusively market-based plane. How then to be cosmopolitan without being colonised? Both the cosmopolitan and the coloniser are clearly aware that the limit of their sphere of action is the world itself. It is a question of thinking of how to surmount the power hierarchies –whether more of a symbolic nature, in the field of politics, or more real, in the military or financial area-, to generate a more egalitarian dialogue.

In *However Incongruous*, 2011, Raqs recreates the story of the first rhinoceros to set foot in Europe in modern times, a male sample that abandoned Goa, in India, in 1514 on the way to Lisbon. Exactly 500 years later, the rhinoceros represented here based on the famous etching by Durero, without ever having seen the animal, emerges as an insurgent and persistent reality. Thus the sculpture becomes an artist's vision based on the vision of another artist, Durero, of something he never saw and could only imagine through the descriptions of Pliny the Elder. The success of this wood engraving was unprecedented: possibly, one of the most influential etchings in history.

Raqs sees reality as a constant field of learning, open to both the FAQs –frequently asked questions-, and the less comfortable RAQs –rarely asked questions-. In its piece *Firm of RAQS and FAQS*, 2014, the artists installed an information desk at which the public could ask either question type. In *Ask the person who sits next to you*, 2012 they even went so far as to do without the middleman. This is perhaps the most ambitious objective that Raqs Collective Media pursues: for each one of us not just to be receivers, but also to become generators and re-distributors of meaning.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

1. Raqs Media Collective

Assets and Debts, 2014

Installation room

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective

2. Raqs Media Collective

The Accumulation of Capital, 2014

Black and white photography

95 × 95 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Project 88, Mumbai

3. Raqs Media Collective

Now, Elsewhere (Escapement), 2009-2014

Spanish edition, 2014

5 clocks: aluminium and glass

70 Ø × 20 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

4. Raqs Media Collective

Auto Measure, 2011-2014

Light boxes with photographs

Triptych

48 × 66 × 10.2 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Experimenter Gallery, Calcuta

5. Raqs Media Collective

The Bureau of RAQS and FAQS, 2014

Information unit

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective

6. Raqs Media Collective

The Capital of Accumulation, 2010

Video Projections with Sound, 50 min

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective, Project 88, Mumbai & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

7. Raqs Media Collective

An Unfinished Correspondence, 2014

Mixed Media

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

8. Raqs Media Collective

The Diarist, 2014

Sound Installation: 6 performative lectures

Participants: Elena Blázquez, Beatriz Botas, Miriam Fernández, Andrés Montes, Anja Schneider and Alberto Vallejo

Sound technician: El Intruso

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective

9. Raqs Media Collective

Blackboard Economy, 2012

Chalk on blackboard

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective

10. Raqs Media Collective

Waiting, 2014

Acrylic color plates and découpé text

400 ejemplares

4 × 15 × 4 cm c/u—ea

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective

11. Raqs Media Collective

Explore Depth, 2014

Diver suit

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

12. Raqs Media Collective

Reverse Engineering the Euphoria Machine, 2008

Multimedia Installation

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Nature

Morte, Berlín

13. Raqs Media Collective

Lemniscate Pantone, 2012

Print on canvas

150 × 215 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

14. Raqs Media Collective

Marks, 2012

LED lamps and golden

185 × 245 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

15. Raqs Media Collective
Meanwhile/Elsewhere, 2014
Intervention: bill boards
Variable dimensions
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective

16. Raqs Media Collective
However Incongruous, 2011
Fiberglass
160 × 320 × 91.4 cm
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Portugal

17. Raqs Media Collective
Ask the person who sits next to you, 2012
Installation self-adhesive vinyl and 19 videos
Variable dimensions
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

18. Raqs Media Collective
Revoltage, 2010
Light bulbs, electric wires and acrylic plate
Triptych
63.5 × 91.5 × 10 cm/63.5 × 183 × 10 cm/63.5 × 152.5 × 4 cm
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Project 88, Mumbai

19. Raqs Media Collective
Chairs, 2014
Installation: chairs, text and fabric
Variable dimensions
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

20. Raqs Media Collective
Time Symposium, 2012
Performance: 6 tables, 12 participants, wine and screen
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective

CURATORS

FERRAN BARENBLIT

(Buenos Aires, 1968)

He is director of Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo (CA2M). Since its inauguration in 2008, CA2M has housed solo exhibitions dedicated to Los Torreznos, Teresa Margolles, Rabih Mroué, Aernout Mik, Bestué / Vives, Leopold Kessler, Cristina Lucas, Guy Ben Ner; group shows such as *PER/FORM. How to do things with(out) words*, *Pop Politics: Activism at 33 revolutions*, *Experimental Station*, *Sonic Youth*, etc. Before joining CA2M, he directed the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica in Barcelona and curated a number of exhibition cycles at Espacio 13 in the Fundació Joan Miró.

He has also worked at The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York as the director's assistant to Marcia Tucker. He has given seminars and conferences on curatorial practice in various museums and universities around the world. In 2008, he was co-curator of the SITE Santa Fe Biennial, in New Mexico.

He forms part of the board of directors of the International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art (IKT) and the Spanish Contemporary Art Directors Association (ADACE)".

CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA

(Mexico City, December 5 1965)

Art critic, curator and historian, holds a Ph.D. in History and Theory of Art from the University of Essex in Britain. Since 1993 he has been a full time researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and between 2002 and 2008 was the first Associate Curator of Art Latin American Collections at the Tate Modern. He is currently Chief Curator at the MUAC Museum in Mexico city.

In 2012, Medina was Head Curator of the Manifesta 9 Biennial in Genk, Belgium, titled *The Deep of the Modern*, in association with Katerina Gregos and Dawn Ades. He is currently the Chief Curator of the MUAC, University Contemporary Art Museum, in Mexico City.

In 2012 he became the sixth recipient of the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement of the Menil Foundation.

RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE

RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE

Raqs Media Collective is a group based in New Delhi, India, created in 1992 by Jeebesh Bagchi (1966), Monica Narula (1969) and Shuddhabrata Sengupta (1968).

Raqs is a think tank that takes aesthetics as a point of departure for social and political reflection. Their name originally referred both to the Persian, Arabic and Urdu word for a state of meditation, and to the acronym "Rarely Asked Questions", RAQs. The collective's initial interests focused on documentary film, creating films like *In the Eye of the Fish* (1997), *Present Imperfect*, *Future Tense* (1999) and *Growing Up* (1995). Playing with multiple roles, the collective acts as artists, curators, and, as in their own words, philosophical agents provocateurs. Currently, the collective produces installations and performances, as well as editorial and curatorial projects and educational programs from different disciplines, such as sociology, geography, mathematics, industrial design, and urban planning. Always playing with an imprecise poetics, Raqs Media Collective analyzes the past, thinks the present, and imagines the future.

CATALOGUE

The catalogue *It's possible because it's possible* is made up of a series of texts, including a dialogue, *Cosmopolitan Patience*, between the two curators of the exhibition, Ferran Barenblit and Cuauhtémoc Medina.

It also includes the script of *The capital of accumulation*, written by Raqs Media Collective.

In addition, an anthology of texts created by Raqs Media Collective will be edited, together with a text by Cuauhtémoc Medina and images from the exhibition”.

IMAGES SELECTION

Downloadable at: <http://www.ca2m.org/es/prensa/acceso-profesionales> Key request: prensa.etc@madrid.org or ca2m@madrid.org



Raqs Media Collective

Now, Elsewhere (Escapement), 2009-2014
Spanish edition, 2014

5 clocks: aluminium and glass 70 Ø × 20 cm
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

Marks, 2012

LED lamps and golden aluminium composite
185 × 245 cm
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

Assets and Debts, 2014

Installation room
Variable dimensions
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective



Raqs Media Collective

Auto Measure, 2011-2014

Light boxes with photographs
Triptych

48 × 66 × 10.2 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Experimenter Gallery, Calcuta



Raqs Media Collective

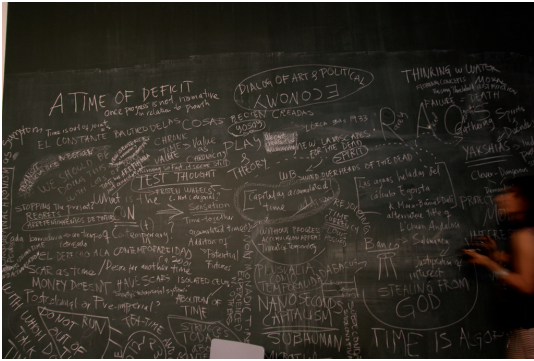
Auto Measure, 2011-2014

Light boxes with photographs

Triptych

48 × 66 × 10.2 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Experimenter Gallery, Calcuta



Raqs Media Collective

Blackboard Economy, 2012

Chalk on blackboard

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective



Raqs Media Collective

Explore Depth, 2014

Diver suit

Variable dimensions

Cortesia de Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

Explore Depth, 2014

Diver suit

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith Street Gallery, Londres

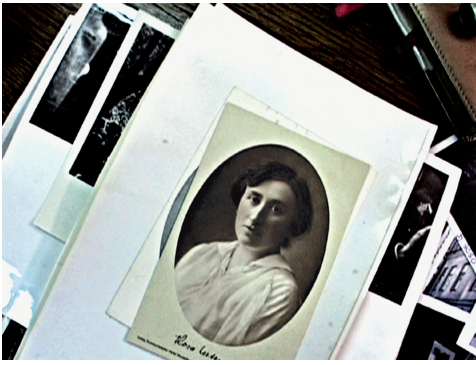


Raqs Media Collective

The Capital of Accumulation, 2010

Synchronized Video Projections with Sound,
50 min

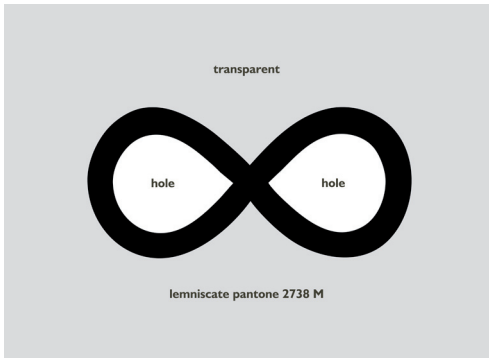
Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective, Project
88, Mumbai & Frith Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

The Capital of Accumulation, 2010
Synchronized Video Projections with Sound,
50 min

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective, Project
88, Mumbai & Frith Street Gallery, Londres



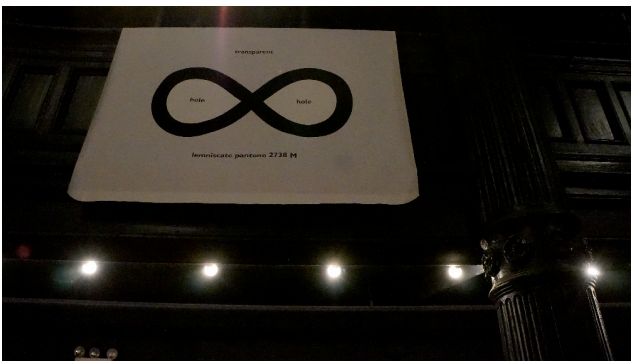
Raqs Media Collective

Lemniscate Pantone, 2012

Print on canvas

150 × 215 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith
Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

Lemniscate Pantone, 2012

Print on canvas

150 × 215 cm

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith
Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

Ask the person who sits next to you, 2012

Installation self-adhesive vinyl

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith
Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

Ask the person who sits next to you, 2012

Installation self-adhesive vinyl

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Frith
Street Gallery, Londres



Raqs Media Collective

Time Symposium, 2012

Performance: 6 tables, 12 participants, wine and screen

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective



Raqs Media Collective

Revoltage, 2010

Light bulbs, electric wires and acrylic plate

Triptych

Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective & Project 88, Mumbai



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