

Oliver Ressler

Oliver Ressler will present a body of work that addresses implications of the global financial and economic crisis as well as the underlying flaws in the model of parliamentary democracy revealed by the crisis. Ressler's films and installations are often based on interview situations in which the artist creates a platform for the concerns of his protagonists. Exemplary is the 8-channel video installation *What is Democracy* (2009), in which by means of interviews with activists he essentially formulates a global analysis of the deep political crisis facing the western model of democracy. This crisis is manifested in the fact that elections in parliamentary democracies increasingly become rituals devoid of meaning, while the real decisions are made outside of public debates. Ressler's wall text *Elections are a Con* (2011) alerts us to this danger, while the wall text *Too Big to Fail* (2011) and the films *The Bull Laid Bear* (2012, co-directed with Zanny Begg) and *Robbery* (2012) explore the handling of the financial and economic crisis, the bailout of banks and its social consequences. The police, soldiers and managers in Ressler's photographic series *We Have a Situation Here* lie motionless in heaps, stripped of their functions. Questions arise as to whether and how alternative systems are feasible, how they can be structured and how existing orders can be altered. The 3-channel video installation *Take The Square* (2012), based on conversations he initiated and filmed among activists of the squares and occupy movements in Madrid, Athens and New York, provides some answers on that. This major work focuses on organizing, horizontal decision-making in assemblies and the tactic of occupying public spaces. Ressler's most recent film, *In the Red* (2014, co-directed by Ana Pečar) is about the Strike Debt group, an offshoot organization of Occupy Wall Street in New York City, that buys, for very little money, personal debt the banks have already written off and then "abolish" the debts.