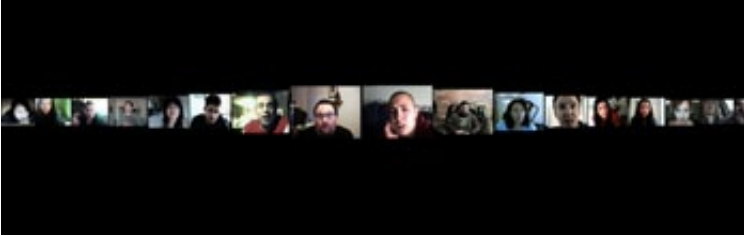


Video Chorus (<http://www.kcet.org/socal/voices/blur-sharpen/video-chorus.html>)

by **Holly Willis**

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Laid_Off_Bookchin.jpg

YouTube videos can act as a kind of cultural chorus, says LA media artist **Natalie Bookchin**, who has spent the last two years studying video blogs posted on the popular site, editing them together, and creating three-dimensional video and sound installations with them. "Aristotle talked about the chorus as being the voice of the

people reflecting on the turmoil caused by the gods," explains Bookchin, who finds a fascinating echo of that process in videos grouped thematically and dealing with current issues. In *Laid Off*, for example, Bookchin collected video blogs, or vlogs, last year that showed people talking about losing their jobs. After viewing dozens of these videos, Bookchin could see distinct patterns. "It's almost like the stages of mourning - you start with anger, then disbelief, and then acceptance," she comments, and indeed, her video project captures the repeating patterns of speech as people recount receiving the devastating news. Bookchin's work is exciting in that it, in her words, "tries to make sense of the flood of information that we're producing about ourselves." She continues, "When this work stays online, it disappears into cacophony, but when you take it out of that context and the YouTube interface, the videos begin to do something else. Someone interviewing me recently said my role as a collector and editor of these videos was somewhere between an anthropologist, dramatist and labor organizer because I'm taking individual voices off of a small screen and making 3-D spaces that assume a collective resistance to alienation and isolation." Bookchin is currently working on a new piece that deals with race and class. Look for it in the future!