

WE MAK \$\$\$NEY NOT ART

Regine / December 17, 2018 / [life online, other reports](#) Excerpt of article

## HANDS-ON. AMERICA, ART AND THE INTERNET

A few weeks ago, I had a chance to visit [The New Art Fest](#), a new media art festival in Lisbon that invites the public to look critically at the way technology and science are transforming society.

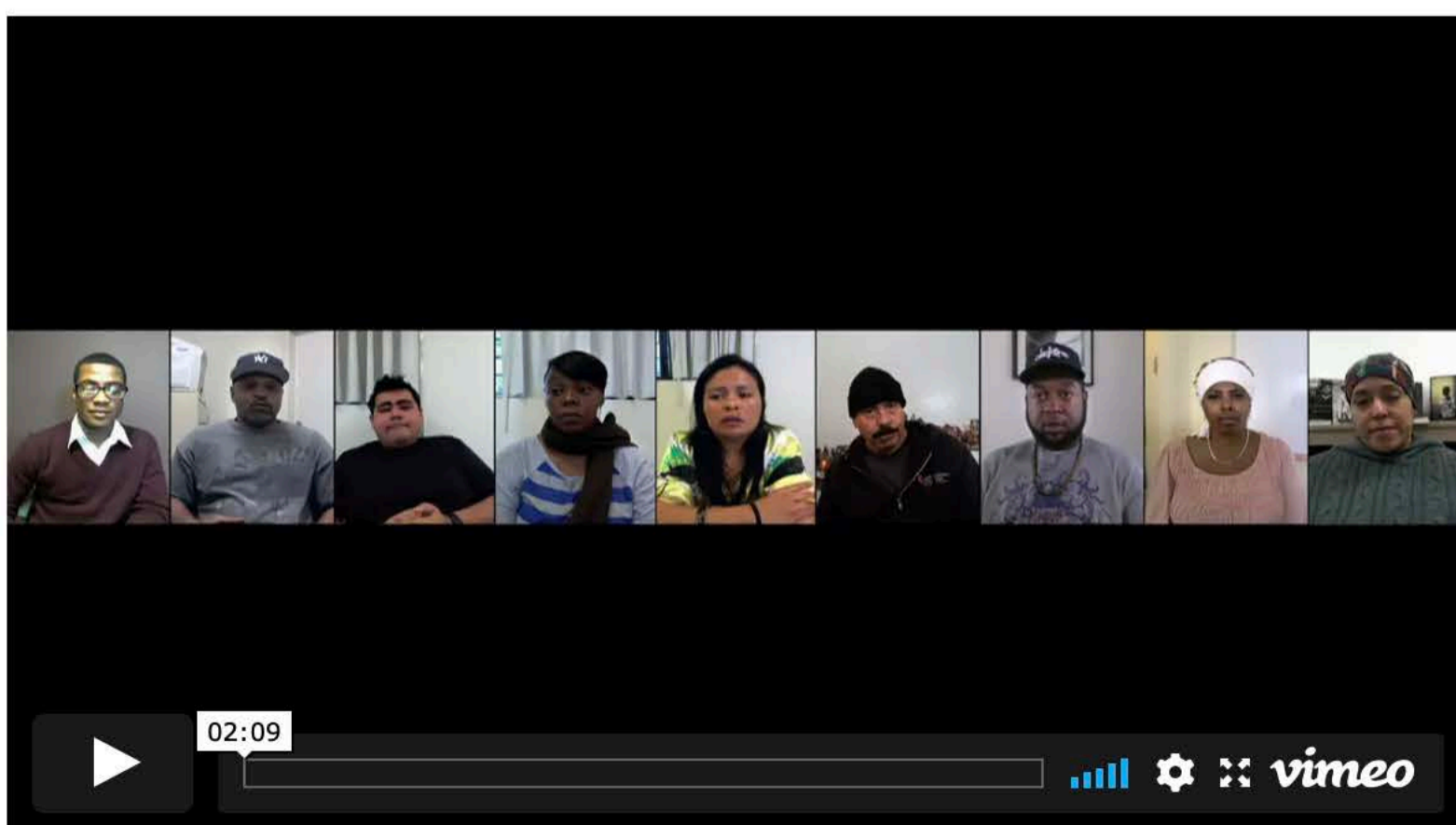


*Natalie Bookchin, [Now he's out in public and everyone can see](#) (trailer), 2017*

Natalie Bookchin's work investigates collective identity as performed on social network sites.

Among her latest works are collages made of extracts from YouTube videos that have been watched by only a handful of viewers. Her aim is to weave connections and associations that no algorithm would ever make. The result is incredibly moving. The films show a middle class America that feels increasingly marginalized and that uses online platforms in lieu of a physical public space that has disappeared.

*Now he's out in public and everyone can see* compiles excerpts from hundreds of vlogs by people who start by saying "I'm not racist or anything" and then give their opinion about media scandals surrounding an African American public figure whose identity we don't know. Although the work was first shown in 2012, it was already showing how bitter many U.S. citizens were when confronted with a supposedly 'post-racial' society and a head of state who wasn't quite white enough.



*Natalie Bookchin, [Long Story Short](#) (clip), 2016*

Perhaps even more poignant, [Long Story Short](#) examines the personal and collective experience of poverty, social fragility and wealth inequality in America through direct-to-camera interviews the artist made with over 100 people. She met them in homeless shelters, food banks, adult literacy programs and job training centers in California, one of the richest regions in the U.S. and one where wealth inequality is particularly jarring.

“To make the archive, I borrow tools and forms of technology — including webcams and laptops — to highlight the voices of those left behind during the technology boom,” the artist [told](#) The Chart. “In the 20 years or so that the internet has been publicly available, it has helped create extraordinary wealth for a few, while many others have lost jobs or job security, widening the already large gap between the rich and the poor. Much of this concentrated wealth is in Northern California, the home of the technology boom.”