

## Coin Locker Hijack

Tokyo-based Belgian artist Eric Van Hove's latest installation makes novel use of 'public' space.

for the original on-line article visit: <http://www.tokyoartbeat.com/tablog/entries.en/2007/12/coin-locker-hijack.html>

In [Main Article 1 Features](#) by [Rebecca Milner](#) 2007-12-18 [print](#) [email](#)

For the latest in the ongoing series of the "Off the record" project, Van Hove has taken over a section of coin lockers in the basement of Shimbashi station and installed the work of 16 individuals from around the world. The participants are mainly artists, but there are some guest curators, the odd sociologist and even publishers rounding out the mix. Clémentine Deliss of Metronome Press ([interviewed](#) on TABlog earlier this year) is exhibiting *Metronome No.11*, a book that resulted from a think tank she coordinated at the Mori Art Museum last autumn.



Nicaraguan artist Ernesto Salmeron setting up his installation with Eric on Sunday afternoon.

Photo: RM

These are no ordinary coin lockers operated by key (though in this lies the metaphorical key of the exhibition). Instead they are accessed by a phone call from the mobile number that the user has programmed into the lock. The set number need not belong to the original user, however, which allows these lockers to function as a place of exchange between two people.

When Van Hove installed the artworks on Sunday afternoon, he programmed in the phone numbers



Like the game, there is also the chance that the installations will be modified along the way and as Van Hove himself puts it, “with a significant chance of things going awry.” There is at first no way to be sure that the work in the locker is actually that of the original artist, explains Van Hove, “it might have been hijacked.” The only way to check is to refer to the project’s website.

A 4x4 grid of 16 photographs showing the interior of green lockers. Each locker contains a different object or set of objects, such as a white box, a colorful striped cloth, a book, a small statue, a blue light, a pile of colorful beads, and a white ball with text.

Photo: Eric Van Hove

Van Hove describes his installation as a parasite exhibition and has planned it to correspond loosely with Pipilotti Rist's "Karakara" exhibition at the nearby Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, an event that is likely to draw a significant presence from the art world. The first one took place simultaneously with the opening of Mori Art Museum's "Africa Remix". Pier Luigi Tazzi, one of



the senior curators of the Mori's inaugural "Happiness" exhibition, is actually a guest curator for this show..

With "Off the record", a satire of the gallery space, he intends to draw visitors to an alternative space outside the mainstream gallery framework. The catch is the unique invitation-only system, which depends entirely on the random communication from one person to another. There is no way to guarantee access, although as Van Hove points out cheekily, "having a lot of friends does maximize your chance."

In theory, "Off the record," could continue indefinitely. A work may become "lost," as a viewer might be tempted to walk home with the piece (and who wouldn't be tempted by some of the choice collectibles?) or a scheduled viewer may fail to make a visit within three days, after which the contents of the locker are turned over to the lost and found. Even Van Hove has no way to document the course of the project, although he has included his email address in the locker in case viewers feel compelled to contact him with updates.

While Van Hove seems to have happily relinquished the reins of his project to the natural course of things, his [webpage](#) is a wealth of information about the details of the project: a handy map and set of instructions, the names of the guest curators and artist participating – including photos of the installations for those who do not receive a lucky phone call – plus photos from the inaugural edition last year. As the chain of visitors continues, any updates and feedback will be posted on the page blog.

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*"Off the record" is located in Shimbashi Station, Karasumori Exit / Shiodome Entrance (follow Exit 4), underground level 1 (B1F). To get there: From the Ginza line take exit 4 and head towards the Karasumori Exit and the green lockers will be on your left before the exit. If arriving by JR, head towards the Yurikamome entrance, and upon reaching it, go down the stairs through the Shiodome Entrance/Karasumori Exit, and look for the lockers on your right.*



**[Rebecca Milner](#)**. Born in San Diego, California in 1980, Rebecca studied modern English, French, and Spanish literature at Stanford University. She now works as a freelance fashion writer and trend scout, as well as doing occasional work as an interpreter, English teacher, and bar hostess. Happily infatuated with the mundane, she relishes making coffee, reading the newspaper, grocery shopping, and riding her bicycle. She is obsessed with all things urban, is an ambitious collector of magazines, makes terrible pottery, prefers graffiti to commissioned sculptures, has an unusual affinity for typefaces, and totally digs performance art. » [See other writings](#)