

ACAW FIELD MEETING | Asia Contemporary Art Week

ACAW 2015 Signature Forum

FIELD MEETING Take 3: *Thinking Performance* | Curatorial Narrative / Statement / Schedule

Curated by ACAW Director Leeza Ahmady

October 31st, 10 AM – 6 PM hosted at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Sacerdote Lecture Hall

November 1st, 10 AM - 5 PM at Hunter College Art Galleries- 205 Hudson Street

See FIELD MEETING Schedule on page 3

*When one arrives at an insight, whereby the next natural step is to risk jumping into the mysterious void of the unknown in order to manifest that into a language, visual or otherwise; that manifestation, the act of giving form or communication to creative insight, which inherently involves engaging or seducing others, is **performance**.*

FIELD MEETING: *Thinking Performance*, the signature program of Asia Contemporary Art Week 2015, stages specially conceived lecture-performances, talks and discussions by over 30 compelling figures, to foreground the diversity and critical role of performance work in the context of Asia. While emulating the experience of a studio visit on a communal scale, the forum spotlights a wide range of practices beyond visual art in an effort to liberate performance from contemporary art world-institutionalized prescriptions. *Thinking Performance* invites broader, more nuanced interpretations and fresh understandings of performativity as an inherent part of all forms of artistic expression and production.

Known for his scrutiny of the still inadequate institutional representation of contemporary art from Asia in the United States, *New York Times* critic **Holland Cotter** delivers the first keynote lecture at this year's FIELD MEETING. Witte de With Director **Defne Ayas** (Rotterdam & Istanbul) expands on Cotter's inquiries, evaluating the extent to which performance has been a vital trigger for the current cultural ecology across Asia and how this factor has allowed for liberation from examining art in Asia solely through the lens of European Modernism. Contributing to the conversation of the need to break away from traditional institutional approaches, **Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker**, Director of the Frye Art Museum in Seattle redefines "the exhibition" as a living organism in constant transformation, turning the museum into both a platform and project to embrace all disciplines.

Often, performance is a means to a process rather than an objective end. It is a method of delivery, a tactful language—the quintessence of all creative practitioners' and their inner workings—painters, writers, architects, comedians, poets, and so on. Performance is at times subliminal. A subconscious attitude poised to seduce. At its best, it provokes consciousness. Threading on such notions, novelist and professor **Anthony Lee** (New York) in his lecture *Going the Distance: Fiction Writing as Performance*, examines the mysterious and meaningful exchange that occurs between author and reader in American literature and how the roots of this may derive from a two-thousand-year-old Indian poem, *The Bhagavad Gita*.

Renowned New Delhi-based artist **Shuddha Sengupta** of Raqs Media Collective tells a story about the imperatives of storytelling and the constant state of inquiry that binds much of Raqs' practice in a never-ending conversation. **Aman Mojadidi** (Paris+Kabul) uses visual imagery, ethnography, and spoken-word to tell a story about migration, statelessness, and the hope for a renewed humanity. Beijing-based artist and curator **Liu Ding** conceives a performance composed of his poems—a plethora of conflicting emotions reflecting the political vernacular embedded within the consciousness of China's population today.

Lecture-performance inspires the format and the curatorial objectives of FIELD MEETING. Heavily practiced by well-known Lebanese artists Rabih Mroue and Walid Raad, it has become increasingly prevalent across Asia. Several of the artists examine the medium's limitless potential for form and function. Academic structures are integrated with performance, relying on the presence of both artist and audience and the immediacy of their exchange. Yielding a play with notions of acceptance, believability and credibility that stretches boundaries of formal and conceptual terms of making and reading art.

San Francisco and Tehran based artist and curator, **Arash Fayeze**'s lecture-performance interlaces official documents, news reports, and personal materials to explore the displacement of a bicameral mind in-between various locations. Referencing art-historical figures and events, **Yan Xing** (Los Angeles+Beijing) narrates a high-camp, melodramatic yet sincere argument to irrefutably validate the work of a non-existent artist. Using delicate sensory prompts, Dubai-based artist **Lantian Xie** guides us through airport terminals, the high seas, hotel resorts and heritage sites, to question preconceived ideas of sounds and body types attached to certain places and expectations of how they ought to perform.

Keynote artist **Ming Wong** (Berlin+Singapore) imagines the plot for a Chinese science fiction opera - a fantastic voyage to uncover diverse expressions of China's past and future, underscored by the nation's radical approach to both tradition and redesigning the future.

Brussels and Ljubljana-based **Ištvan Išt Huzjan**'s multi-layered lecture-performance stems from his research on Korean Land Art in Changdong, Seoul and his travel-performance from Korea to Ljubljana, Slovenia over water and land using only public transport. Exploring performance as a mode for exercising agency, several artists navigate the conflictive yet symbiotic relationship between freedom and restraint, autonomy and discipline.

Sislej Xhafa (New York+ Kosovo) depicts himself as a quiet and obedient youth in his talk entitled *Mother*, to confront rules of conduct and control mechanisms, subjects generally challenged by his conceptually vigorous works across a variety of mediums.

Christopher K. Ho (New York+Providence) examines the process by which artists are made and culture is packaged-using instructional diagrams on "tiger" parenthood and life planning in an Asian/American context. **Tang Dixin**'s (Shanghai) performance, *Mr. Hungry* uses physical divergence between the act of 'walking' and 'climbing' in a social environment as an imaginative interval to defy social norms; his actions suggest retreat to a subdued expression of disobedience. Through her performance *99 Commandments*, **Nezaket Ekic** (Berlin+Stuttgart) invokes her own cathartic ritual to break from the ever-gripping shackles of all the world's religious commandments.

Artist **Bingyi** (Beijing) perceives living as performing with unseen forces, and discusses this in the context of her large land-art performance project *Epoché* (2014). **Jeff Cylkowski** (New York) considers his artistic beginnings in graffiti art and break dancing, and how these genres continue to inform his painting practice today, in terms of both technical process, and philosophical investigations.

Zeynep Kayan (Ankara) examines the act of photographing and re-photographing- a technique that defines her work-as a process that gives way to infinite possibilities; a continuous transformation and discovery. In (re)creating "new" from "old," she questions notions of authenticity and time. **Vibha Galhotra**'s (New Delhi) visual journey of the Yamuna River in Delhi invokes its mythological significance, mourning the river's current polluted state through photo/video documentation - a call for action on ecological catastrophe.

Qasim Riza Shaheen's (Manchester+Lahore) *Undeliverable Mail*, is an intimate letter in the form of an audio recording, that contemplates a variety of subjects, such as gender and narcissism, particularly and atypically through the poetics of Sufism. **Fu Xiaodong**, director at Space Station introduces the young Beijing-based collective **Double Fly Art Center** and their performance, involving an arrangement of choreographed, spontaneous gestures. **Nora Taylor**, Professor at the Art Institute of Chicago touches on contentious issues of authorship in performance documentation, presenting Ray Langenbach's performance art archives and its significance in Singapore's art history.

Two esteemed art publications are also spotlighted through special sessions at FIELD MEETING this year. The poignancies of individual and personal histories, the subtleties of reciprocal exchange, and how these are incorporated by celebrated artist **Lee Mingwei**, (Paris+Taipei) in recent and past projects, is shared through his conversation with ArtAsiaPacific (AAP) editor-at-large **H.G. Masters** (Istanbul). LEAP deputy editor **Robin Peckham** (Hong Kong) spearheads a discussion with artists **Nadim Abbas** (Hong Kong) and **Korakrit Arunanondchai** (New York+Bangkok), to investigate the invisible elements that allow object-art, such as sculpture and installation, to radiate performance, and how artists may encode "live-ness" and performativity into their object-based work.

FIELD MEETING Take 3: Thinking Performance thrives on unexpected connections in a variety of relevant subjects with a focus on creative process, conceptual exchange, experimentation and collaboration. By considering individual practices and dynamic relationships with historical discourses and social and political conditions, it acknowledges achievements within the field, while advocating approaches that critically unearth the recent past and thoroughly envision the future.

FIELD MEETING Take 3: *Thinking Performance* Schedule – ACAW 2015

Saturday, October 31st

At The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education -
Bonnie J. Sacerdote Lecture Hall, 1000 5th Ave.
(Enter on 81st Street, to the left of main entrance)

9:45 Check-in / 10:05 Doors Open

10:15 **Opening Thoughts:** Leeza AHMADY

Keynotes:

10:30 Anthony LEE

10:45 MING Wong

11:10 Holland COTTER

11:30 Defne AYAS

11:50 Ištvan Išt HUZJAN

12:10 **Discussion Session**

12:45 **Lunch Break**

1:45 Bingyi

2:00 Sislej XHAFA

2:15 YAN Xing

2:30 Jeff CYLKOWSKI

2:45 Nezaket EKICI

3:00 **Discussion Session**

3:30 **Break**

3:45 Shuddha SENGUPTA

4:00 Arash FAYEZ

4:15 Aman MOJADIDI

4:30 Lantian XIE

4:45 TANG Dixin

5:00 Jo-Anne BIRNIE DANZKER

5:15 **Discussion Session**

5:50 **Final Thoughts:** Diane LEWIS

6:00 FIELD MEETING Day 1 Closes

Sunday, November 1st

At Hunter College Art Galleries, 205 Hudson St. 3rd floor
(Enter through Gallery on Canal between Hudson & Greenwich St.)

10:15 Check-in / 10:35 Doors Open

10:45 **Opening Thoughts:** Leeza AHMADY

11:00 LEE Mingwei in conversation with HG MASTERS

11:45 Nora TAYLOR

12:00 Qasim Riza SHAHEEN

12:15 Zeynep KAYAN

12:30 Vibha GALHOTRA

12:45 Christopher Ho

1:00 **Discussion Session**

(Led by Arash FAYEZ + Leeza AHMADY)

1:30 **Lunch Break**

2:30 Double Fly Art Center & FU Xiaodong

2:45 LIU Ding

3:00 TANG Dixin

3:15 **Discussion Session**

(Led by Xiaoyu WENG + YAN Xing)

3:45 **Break**

4:00 Robin PECKAM in conversation with Nadim ABBAS
& Korakrit ARUNANONDCHAI

4:45 **Closing Thoughts:** Iftikhar DADI

5:00 FIELD MEETING Day 2 Closes

Monday, Nov 2nd 6:30 - 8:30 PM

At Performa Hub - Open to the Public

An Extension of FIELD MEETING: *Thinking Performance*

ACAW collaborates with Performa 15 in celebration of the Biennial's 10th year of distinguished programming, for a special evening extension of FIELD MEETING: *Thinking Performance*, focusing on lecture-performance as a medium. Introduced by Performa Curator-at-Large, **Defne Ayas** and led by ACAW Director **Leeza Ahmady** & Performa Curator **Adrienne Edwards**, the panel discussion includes artists **Arash Fayeze, Yan Xing, Liu Ding, Ming Wong, Lantian Xie**, and curators **Natasha Ginwala and Xiaoyu Weng**.