

MoMA PRESENTS *WORDS IN THE WORLD*, A PERFORMANCE SERIES EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND PERFORMANCE ART

Words in the World

April 16—May 10, 2012

Various locations around the Museum

NEW YORK, March 29, 2012—The Museum of Modern Art's Performance Program resumes in April with *Words in the World*, a series of performances and programs that examine the different facets of language and the relationship to performance. *Words in the World* looks at the intertwining of political, poetic, and linguistic structures through theatrical and staged events, dialogues and forms of public address, and experimental actions. Utilizing different presentation formats, the program takes place in various locations in the Museum from April 16 to May 10, 2012. The performance series is organized by Sabine Breitwieser, Chief Curator, and Ana Janevski, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Held in conjunction with the Museum's exhibition *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language*, on view from May 6 to August 27, 2012, *Words in the World* explores performative aspects of language as a means of perpetuating the flow and movement of thoughts and as a tool for political activism. In addition, the series reveals the life of words, signs, and numbers when liberated from their conventional forms and meanings.

Performance Schedule

My Barbarian

April 16, 7:00 p.m., The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

The Los Angeles-based performance collective My Barbarian—Malik Gaines (American, b. 1973), Jade Gordon (American, b. 1975), and Alexandro Segade (American, b. 1973)—combine their eclectic background in theater, theory, and contemporary art to create incisive, campy, site-specific plays, concerts, theatrical situations, and video installations. All three group members will be present to discuss their most recent works.

Organized by Ana Janevski, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Presented as part of *Modern Mondays*. See admission below.

Adam Pendleton and Lorraine O'Grady

April 23, 7:00 p.m., The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

Over the past half decade Adam Pendleton (American, b. 1984) has created language-based silkscreens, video, and performances that critically investigate issues of identity, queerness, and power structures, using appropriated images, texts, and cultural clichés from a broad range of sources to re-imagine political and social realities. In his well-known series *Black Dada* (2008–ongoing) and *System of Display* (2008–ongoing) series, he "associates" the figures of poets and Conceptual artists, while repeatedly staging dialogues between the 20th century avant-gardes and

the history of black politics. Lorraine O'Grady (American, b. 1934) is an artist and critic whose installations, performances, and texts address issues of diaspora, hybridity, and black female subjectivity. O'Grady first rose to prominence with her guerilla performances as Mlle. Bourgeoise Noire (1980-83), in which she invaded art openings dressed in debutante white, beating herself with flowers and reciting verses that highlighted the segregated nature of the art world. Pendleton will present a live "portrait" of O'Grady through a scripted conversation that upends normative uses of language and the re-presentation of O'Grady's work.

Organized by Ana Janevski, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Presented as part of *Modern Mondays*. See admission below.

Andrea Geyer, Sharon Hayes, Ashley Hunt, Katya Sander, and David Thorne.

Combatant Status Review Tribunals, pp. 002954–003064: A Public Reading. 2007

April 27, 2:00–6:00 p.m., and April 28, 12:00–4:00 p.m.

The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium

This performance comprises a four-hour public reading of unedited transcripts from 18 Combatant Status Review Tribunals held at the U.S. military prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, between July 2004 and March 2005. During the reading, nine performers rotate through eight juridical positions. The artists find a way to work with speech, identity, history, and politics without the framework of theatrical form. Calling up historic texts, the artists question the political and social conditions in which we are living now.

Organized by Sabine Breitwieser, Chief Curator, and Ana Janevski, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, with Jill A. Samuels, Producer, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Performance is free with Museum admission.

An Evening with Andrea Geyer, Sharon Hayes, Ashley Hunt, Katya Sander, and David Thorne

April 30, 7:00 p.m., The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

In conjunction with their installation [*9 Scripts from a Nation at War*](#), a recent MoMA acquisition that is currently on view in the Media Gallery, and the performance of *Combatant Status Review Tribunals, pp. 002954-003064: A Public Reading* on April 27 and 28 at MoMA, the artists Andrea Geyer (German, b. 1971), Sharon Hayes (American, b. 1970), Ashley Hunt (American, b. 1970), Katya Sander (Danish, b. 1970), and David Thorne (American, b. 1960) will discuss the works and their collaborative practice.

Organized by Sabine Breitwieser, Chief Curator Department of Media and Performance Art.

Presented as part of *Modern Mondays*. See admission below.

Nora Schultz with Ei Arakawa. *Countdown Performance. 2007/2012*

Monday, April 30, 4:30 p.m., The Bauhaus Staircase, second floor

Wednesday, May 2, 4:30 p.m., The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden

Nora Schultz (German, b. 1975), together with New York-based artist Ei Arakawa (b. 1977), performs a countdown from 10 to zero, bending a thin, flexible length of stainless steel into the form of each successive number. Because of the malleable nature of the material, each new number carries traces of the previous bended forms, and the steel becomes increasingly warped. The work confronts material transformation and the accumulation of allegory through simple means, from neutrality through action. Zero—the return to neutrality—is impossible to achieve once the material has been loaded with the history of its transformations.

Organized by Ana Janevski, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, with Jill A. Samuels, Producer, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Performance is free with Museum admission.

Paulina Olowksa. *Alphabet*. 2005/2012

May 3, 4, and 5, 4:30 p.m., The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden

The performance *Alphabet*, by Paulina Olowksa (Polish, b. 1976), is inspired by Czech designer Karel Teige's typographic book *ABECEDA* (which was published in Prague in 1926 and recently reprinted). Referring to the poetics of typography and Eastern European avant-garde tradition, the work involves collaboration with other performers, who curve and stretch their bodies into 26 letters, from A to Z, to construct a new system for conveying meaning. The performance also includes the presentation of short poems by Josef Strau, Frances Stark, and Paulus Mazur. The physicality of text, writing, and the contexts in which words appear are all parts of Olowksa's poetics. *Alphabet* was first performed in 2005 at Galerie Meerrettich, on the roof of the Kiosk at the Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in Berlin, within a project curated by Josef Strau.

Performers: Katy Pile, Jessie Gold, Daniel Squire, and Kevin Hurley.

Organized by Ana Janevski, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, with Jill A. Samuels, Producer, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Performance is free with Museum admission.

Guy de Cointet. *Five Sisters*. 1981/2011

***Espahor ledet ko Uluner!* 1973/2011**

May 9 and 10, 7:00 p.m.

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1

From the late 1960s until his untimely death in 1983, Guy de Cointet (French, 1934–1983) was an active member of the Los Angeles art scene. *Five Sisters* is a collage of clichéd exclamations about beauty, self-help, and feigned emotions. Inspired by de Cointet's compulsive attraction to language, the performance presents the story of five sisters, who busy themselves with the problems and pleasures of modern life on a Sunday afternoon. Discussions about cosmetic surgeons, exotic locales, and New Age tinctures punctuate the simple stage directions. *Five Sisters* was first performed in 1982 in Los Angeles at the Barnsdall Park Theatre, and it was the last performance to be staged during the artist's lifetime. De Cointet collaborated with sculptor Eric Orr (1939–1998), who created the stage, lighting, and sound for the original production. In this new production the lighting and sound are reconstructed by Elizabeth Orr. The restaging of *Five Sisters* is the result of research conducted by art historian Marie de Brugerolle, as part of *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution*, Amsterdam.

Performers: Violeta Sanchez, Einat Tuchman, Adva Zakai, and Veridiana Zurita.

Research and dramaturgy: Marie de Brugerolle, Direction: Jane Zingale

Light and sound: Elizabeth Orr, Wardrobe: moniquevanheist

In addition to *Five Sisters*, Guy de Cointet's performance *Espahor ledet ko Uluner!* will be performed by Jane Zingale. *Espahor ledet ko Uluner!*, which is a short monologue that departs from Guy de Cointet's novel of the same name. The piece presents a succession of apparently everyday references, with different moods, in a language invented by the artist.

Performances are coproduced by *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Organized by Sabine Breitwieser, Chief Curator, and Ana Janevski, Associate Curator, with Jill A. Samuels, Producer, Department of Media and Performance Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and Frédérique Bergholtz, Director, *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution*.

Additional support *Five Sisters* and *Espahor ledet ko Uluner!* is provided by Étant Donnés.

Admission is free for Museum members and for Museum ticketholders. \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$8 full-time students with current I.D.

SPONSORSHIP:

The Performance Program is made possible by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation.

Additional support for *Words in the World: Five Sisters and Espahor ledet ko Uluner!* is provided by Étant Donnés: The French American Fund for Contemporary Art.

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

Who's That Guy? Tell Me More About Guy de Cointet. 2011. Directed by Marie de Brugerolle. Wednesday, May 2, 7:00 p.m., Theater 3

In conjunction with Guy de Cointet's *Five Sisters* (1982/2011), as part of *Words in the World*, MoMA will host a screening of *Who's That Guy?*, a portrait of Guy de Cointet, the French-born artist based in California who created text and sculptural works, often combining them as props and stage sets in theatrical performance pieces. The film is composed of interviews and documents compiled over a 10-year period by art critic Marie de Brugerolle. The screening will be followed by a conversation with director Marie de Brugerolle; Tim Griffin, director and chief curator at The Kitchen; Connie Butler, Chief Curator, Department of Drawings, MoMA; and Adva Zakai and Veridiana Zurita, two actors performing in *Five Sisters* at MoMA. Moderated by Sabine Breitwieser, Chief Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, MoMA.

Admission is free for Museum members and for Museum ticketholders. \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$8 full-time students with current I.D.

RELATED EXHIBITION:

Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language

May 6–August 27, 2012

Special Exhibition Gallery, third floor

In conjunction with *Words in the World*, MoMA presents *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language*, an exhibition that looks at some of the ways contemporary artists have experimented with language, freeing it from the page and from its communicative and descriptive duties. Works by 12 contemporary artists and artists' groups are presented in juxtaposition with works by key 20th-century artists, all of which concentrate on the material qualities of language—visual, aural, and beyond. The exhibition includes painting, sculpture, film, video, drawing, prints, and audio. The title is taken from two touchstone objects in the exhibition, one historical, the other contemporary: Robert Smithson's seminal illustration of words as material, *A Heap of Language* (1966), and Shannon Ebner's video *The Ecstaticalphabet* (2011), which animates, atomizes, and presents language as a time-based experience. *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language* is organized by Laura Hoptman, Curator, with Eleonore Hugendubel, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art.

Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language is made possible by Hanjin Shipping.

Major support is provided by Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley and by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation.

Additional funding is provided by The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

No. 14

Press Contact:

Paul Jackson, (212) 708-9593, paul_jackson@moma.org

For downloadable high-resolution images, register at MoMA.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400, MoMA.org

Hours: Wednesday through Monday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). **MoMA.org:** \$22.50 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. *No service charge for tickets ordered on MoMA.org. Tickets purchased online may be printed out and presented at the Museum without waiting in line.* (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).

Modern Mondays Admission: Admission is free for Museum members and for Museum ticketholders. \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$8 full-time students with current I.D.