

For Immediate Release

PERFORMA 09

THE THIRD EDITION OF THE ACCLAIMED BIENNIAL OF NEW VISUAL ART PERFORMANCE TO FEATURE MORE THAN 150 INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS IN SPECTACULAR CITY-WIDE EVENTS

*11 Performa Commissions and 6 Performa Premieres
Exemplify Incredible Program Coming to New York City
November 1–22, 2009*

*Highlights Include Commissions of Artists Guy Ben-Ner, Candice Breitz,
Omer Fast, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Mike Kelley, Arto Lindsay,
Wangechi Mutu, Christian Tomaszewski, and Yeondoo Jung, and
Premieres By Artists Keren Cytter, Tacita Dean, Alica Framis,
Loris Greaud, William Kentridge, and Joan Jonas*

Biennial to Kick Off with One-of-a-Kind Food Event Created by Jennifer Rubell

New York, September 15, 2009 — Performa 09, the third edition of the internationally acclaimed biennial of new visual art performance, will be held in New York City from November 1–22, 2009, showcasing new work by more than 150 of the world's most exciting contemporary artists. Presentations will include 11 new Performa Commissions and, for the first time ever, a Performa Premieres program of 6 remarkable pieces that have never been seen in New York. For Performa 09's opening night, renowned hostess, hotelier, food writer, and conceptualist Jennifer Rubell will present *Creation*, a unique dinner sure to be like nothing guests have ever experienced before.

Over its three week-run, Performa 09's innovative program will break down the boundaries between visual art, music, dance, poetry, fashion, architecture, film, television, radio, graphic design, and the culinary arts, presenting over 110 events in collaboration with a consortium of more than 80 of the city's leading arts institutions, 40 curators from around the world, and a network of public and private venues throughout the city.

"This promises to be an incredibly exciting Performa biennial," says Performa Director RoseLee Goldberg, "with more Performa Commissions and Premieres than ever, and a program that mixes

disciplines, media, and generations. It will link people and places across the boroughs and bring a broad cross-section of audiences together in a celebration of the extraordinary cultural capital that is New York City. Performa 09 will demonstrate that there is no such thing as an intellectual or creative recession.”

PERFORMA COMMISSIONS

The centerpiece of the Performa 09 biennial is its internationally renowned Performa Commissions program. Initiated by Performa Director RoseLee Goldberg to create new performances for the 21st century, the Performa Commission invites artists — many of whom have not worked ‘live’ before — to create new work especially for the biennial. “I wanted to encourage artists to write the next chapter of live art,” Goldberg says, “to take us in a direction never seen before.”

Performa supports its commissioned artists at all levels of development and production, and presents the final work in the context of a world-class biennial, including international touring following the New York premieres.

The 11 Performa 09 Commissions include new works by 9 individual artists and 2 multi-artist projects:

Filmed and edited in-camera over the course of twelve months, **Guy Ben-Ner** will present an unusual “live film” that captures an ongoing phone conversation he has with himself, flying to and fro between Berlin and Tel Aviv, as he sorts out the lives and relationships that he maintains in the peripatetic lifestyle that has become common for the global artist.

Video and installation artist **Candice Breitz** presents *New York, New York*, her first-ever live performance, which will feature nearly-identical casts composed of identical twins performing on duplicate sets, moving the analysis of sameness and difference that has been central to Breitz’s video-based work into the space of performance.

Interested in probing and unsettling the relationship between history and memory, **Omer Fast** will trace the arc of a story traveling from a first-person account to an improvised actor’s dramatization in an investigation of how personal experience can take flight from reality.

Visual artist **Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster** and composer and performer Ari Benjamin Meyers collaborate in *K.62*, a musical mystery that involves an audience, an orchestra, a little bit of magic, and a lot of imagination, inspired by Orson Welles’ unforgettable film version of *The Trial* (1962).

Photo and moving image artist **Yeondoo Jung** will present his first live performance, *Cinemagician*, in which the audience will be simultaneously shown the reality of a stage production and the illusory effects of cinema, as created live onstage by popular Korean magician Eunkyul Lee.

In the Judson Memorial Church, **Mike Kelley** will present *Day is Done Judson Church Dance*, three short performance pieces inspired by the darkly funny vignettes in his 2005 film and video installation *Day is Done*, including “The Horse Dance of the False Virgin,” “The Judson Church Horse Dance,” and a new “Battle of the Bands”-style work involving 13 people assembled on and around a large ladder playing largely improvised music on horns.

On New York City's Marathon Sunday, avant-garde music pioneer **Arto Lindsay** will present *SOMEWHERE I READ*, a multidisciplinary arts parade featuring over 50 performers marching through the streets, using cell phones as musical instruments and carrying large screens that will receive projections invisible to the naked eye, in an inventive re-thinking of the standard parade format.

Wangechi Mutu will present *Stone Ihiga*, a multi-layered performance and installation created in collaboration with the riveting vocalist/composer Imani Uzuri. Centered around the practice of lapidation, and specifically inspired by stories of women who have been found guilty of adultery or promiscuity, *Stone Ihiga* will be a rumination on the fragility and tenacity of our humanity and spirituality, adding translucent surfaces and a live dimension to Mute's exquisite collage works.

Christian Tomaszewski will consider how the future was imagined by the Communist regimes of the former Soviet Bloc in *Mother Earth Sister Moon*, an archaeological investigation into the fashion and style of the era culminating in a fantastical fashion show with clothing, choreography, set design, and sound all produced in collaboration with Joanna Malinowska.

Inspired by the lost Futurist film *Vita Futurista* (Futurist Life, 1916), *Futurist Life Redux* is a new film featuring contributions by an incredible group of contemporary film and video artists—**Trisha Baga, chameckilerner, Martha Colburn, Ben Coonley, George Kuchar, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Shana Moulton, Shannon Plumb, Aida Ruilova, Matthew Silver and Shoal Zohar (The Future)**, and **Michael Smith**—re-imagining the eleven segments of the original *Futurist Life* for the twenty-first century.

In *Music for 16 Futurist Noise Intoners*, an incredible group of musicians and composers from the experimental music world—**Blixa Bargeld, John Butcher, Luciano Chessa, Pauline Oliveros, Mike Patton, Anat Pick, Elliott Sharp, and Jennifer Walsche with Tony Conrad**, among others—will present an evening-length concert of original scores and newly commissioned compositions for the Futurist instruments intonarumori, or “noise-intoners,” being reconstructed for the first time in their entirety by Performa.

PERFORMA PREMIERES

The Performa Premieres program showcases extraordinary live works that have never been shown in New York before. Working closely with each artist for as long as two years or more, the Performa team searches for the perfect venue to host each performance, and makes sure that every detail of the artist's vision can be fully realized.

For Performa 09, Performa Premieres will be presented by 6 artists:

In *History in the Making or The Secret Diaries of Linda Schultz*, Israeli visual artist **Keren Cytter's** first evening-length theatrical production, Cytter combines dance, video, and music to tell the story of liberal activist John Webber and graphic designer Linda Schultz, who are each unexpectedly transformed into the opposite sex in a performance that uses the artist's trademark “kitchen-sink existentialism” to wittily address the frustrations and confines of social roles.

A stunning 16-millimeter, feature-length film showing Merce Cunningham and his company rehearsing an Event in the craneway of an abandoned Ford Motor factory in Northern California, *Craneway Event*, by **Tacita Dean**, marks the second collaboration between Cunningham and Dean and the last appearance made by this legendary choreographer on film.

Alica Framis presents *Lost Astronaut*, an ongoing performance-installation exploring the possibility of living on the moon through the ironic and fictional character and activities of a female astronaut, who will live in a tent for three weeks during the biennial, residing among drawings and prototypes by artists and writers—including Marina Abramovic, Brian Keith-Jackson, and Rita McBride, among many others—that aim to both parody and make a claim for women’s presence on the moon.

In **Loris Greaud’s** project for Performa 09, a video of a breathtaking fireworks display in Abu Dhabi (designed by internationally acclaimed pyrotechnicians Groupe F in collaboration with Greaud, and involving the hip hop group Anti-Pop Consortium) that recreates the bioluminescence of deep-sea creatures through flashing blue lights in the night sky will be shown on the giant MTV screen in Times Square.

A comic and visually dazzling performance by renowned South African artist **William Kentridge**, in *I Am Not Me, the Horse is Not Mine*, the artist himself gives an unusual presentation related to his current opera-in-progress: a work inspired by Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich’s satirical opera *The Nose*, based on the Nikolai Gogol short story of the same name.

Reading Dante, a large-scale performance by video and performance pioneer **Joan Jonas**, is based on elements from Dante’s epic fourteenth-century poem the *Divine Comedy*, collaging footage shot in four locations—the Canadian woods, 1970s New York, a ruin surrounding a lava field in Mexico City, and a shadow play in Italy—together to translate Dante into Jonas’s own remarkable “infernal paradise.”

OPENING NIGHT

For the Opening Night Benefit Dinner of Performa 09, **Jennifer Rubell** has created a series of food installations and delicious surprises that will lead guests on an interactive food journey through all floors of the experimental venue X Initiative.

ABOUT PERFORMA

Performa, a non-profit multidisciplinary arts organization established by RoseLee Goldberg in 2004, is dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth century art and to encouraging new directions in performance for the twenty-first century.

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More information is available at www.performa-arts.org.

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