

◆ PERFORMA 11

NEW VISUAL ART PERFORMANCE

For Immediate Release

PERFORMA 11

**PERFORMA ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL
PERFORMA COMMISSIONS AND PREMIERES
FOR UPCOMING VISUAL ART PERFORMANCE BIENNIAL**

**PERFORMA COMMISSIONS
TAREK ATOUI, GERARD BYRNE, LIZ MAGIC LASER**

**PERFORMA PREMIERES
NATHANIEL MELLORS, MAI-THU PERRET, ZHOU XIAOHU**

November 1–21, 2011, in New York City

New York, NY, October 6, 2011 — **Performa is pleased to announce additional Performa Commission and Premieres** for its upcoming visual art performance biennial **Performa 11 (November 1–21, 2011)** in New York City. Acclaimed international artists to receive Performa Commissions are **Tarek Atoui, Gerard Bryne, and Liz Magic Laser**. Additional artists to receive Performa Premieres are **Nathaniel Mellors, Mai-Thu Perret, and Zhou Xiaohu**.

As **America’s first and only international biennial in all disciplines**, the Performa biennial has become one of the most **anticipated art events on the international calendar**. Once again, Performa will present new work by a range of artists working in all disciplines including **visual art, dance, music, film, radio, architecture, comedy, design, and food**. “The Performa biennial is unique amongst biennials in that we work with over **50 cultural partners throughout the city** as well as with **over 25 international curators** to present the **most innovative and exciting art of our times**,” says **RoseLee Goldberg**, Performa Founding Director and Curator.

The **Performa Commissions** are a central part of the Performa biennial and give artists unparalleled support to realize new work in live performance. Atoui, Byrne, and Magic Laser join an acclaimed group who have already received Performa Commissions for Performa 11: Iona Rozeal Brown, Elmgreen & Dragset, Simon Fujiwara, Ragnar Kjartansson, Guy Maddin, Mika Rottenberg and Jon Kessler, Frances Stark, Shirin Neshat, and Ming Wong. The **Performa Premieres** program presents exceptional live work that has never been seen in New York. Additional Performa Premiere artists include Robert Ashley and Boris Charmatz.

For his Performa Commission, artist **Tarek Atoui** (b. 1980, Beirut, Lebanon) will present *Visiting Tarab*, a live performance for which the artist invited sixteen musicians and sound artists including **Anti-Pop Consortium, Uriel Barthelemi, Jonathan Butcher, DJ Spooky, Lukas Ligeti, Robert Lowe, Raz Mesinai, Ikue Mori, Sara Parkins, Zeena Parkins, Elliott Sharp and Zafer Tawil**, to visit Beirut this past summer to study and sample the most extensive collection of Classical Arab music in the world, owned by Lebanese collector Kamal Kassar. Using this library as their material, the artists will gather in New York for a one-night-only evening of continuous music by each of the musicians, building on ideas inspired by Tarab, where the performance space is considered one of enchantment and ecstasy.

Gerard Byrne's (b. 1969, Dublin, Ireland) Performa Commission will use a theatrical prop storage space to generate a scenographic "elephant's graveyard" of drama. In this process-based project, viewers will respond to installed props, mixing with actors employed in a subtle, interspersed fashion, barely differentiated from the audience as they move throughout the site. This multi-phase work-in-process will include a video produced of this interaction that will be installed in the space itself during the exhibition. Byrne's Performa Commission explores the ambiguous historical relationship between theatrical props and sculpture, suggesting a site where viewers are completely immersed "behind the scenes" as they watch drama get broken down into its most fundamental elements.

For Performa 11 **Liz Magic Laser** (b. 1981, New York City) will present a new mixed-media performance titled *I Feel Your Pain*, that will restage America's recent political contests as a romantic drama. Presented in a movie theater, the performance will happen both amongst the audience and on the cinema's screen. The artist's Performa Commission remixes agitprop theater tactics, particularly the Russian Constructivist idea of a "living newspaper," to examine how emotion is used to establish authenticity on the political stage.

For her Performa Premiere presented with The Swiss Institute, visual artist **Mai-Thu Perret** (b. 1976, Geneva, Switzerland) has collaborated with choreographer Laurence Yadi to present a contemporary ballet adaptation of George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* comic strip, published in American newspapers from 1916–1944. *Love Letters in Ancient Brick* focuses on the curious love triangle and misinterpretation of affection between a carefree simple-minded cat, an obsessive antagonistic mouse, and a protective police dog. This three-dimensional comic strip will feature a rotating cast of five dancers, as well as singer-narrator Tamar Barnett-Herrin, and will present variations on the same story drawn on Herriman's primal, psychoanalytical drama; his surreal universe; and his use of invented language.

Employing the aesthetic and format of British television comedy-dramas, **Nathaniel Mellors's** (b. 1974, Doncaster, England) surreal six-part video series *Ourhouse* combines sculpture, language, and power dynamics in an upper-class home. A character named "The Object" invades the house of a wealthy British family in the manner of Terence Stamp's character in Pier Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968), and begins to control the dynamic of language in the home. The idea of sculpture is fundamental to the piece, The Object ingests political texts from the house library and has "cultural-indigestion," leading to the birth of new sculpture.

For Performa 11, **Zhou Xiaohu** (b. 1960, Changzhou, China) will present *Crazy English*, a performance-seminar with teacher Zhou Jianhua, Vice President of *Crazy English*, a company specializing in teaching the English language to thousands of Chinese students by repeating sounds, words, and sentences in English along with physical gestures. *Crazy English* is both a performance and an effective technique that translates standard American English into theatrical movement. Concerned with Chinese social behavior, Zhou's aim, through the simple action of bringing *Crazy English* to New York, is to show how something familiar can instantly be transformed into something alien and foreign, thus raising questions of legitimacy and the distorted effects of cultural imperialism.

FUNDING

Lead support for has been provided by Toby Devan Lewis; Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation; and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Major support has been provided by Sharjah Art Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; The David and Elaine Potter Foundation; Christie's; Imagine Ireland; and Paddle8. Additional support has been provided by Depart Foundation for the Discussion Exhibition and Production of Art; Royal Norwegian Consulate General in New York; The Cultural Services of the French Embassy/Maison Francaise and Institut Francais; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Consulate General of Denmark in New York; Etant Donnés Contemporary Art; FUSED: French U.S. Exchange in Dance, a program of the National Dance Project/New England Foundation for the Arts and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York, and FACE (French American Cultural Exchange), with lead funding from Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Florence Gould Foundation; The Dedalus Foundation; Office for Contemporary Art Norway; Danish Arts Council Committee for International Visual Arts; Arts Council Norway; SAHA, Toshiba; Dorothea Leonhardt Fund, Communities Foundation of Texas; Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam; Office of Cultural Affairs, Consulate General of Israel in NY; Artis – Contemporary Israeli Art Fund; The American-Scandinavian Foundation; Helena Rubinstein Foundation; Moon and Stars Project of The American Turkish Society; Foundation of Contemporary Arts; the Performa Board of Directors; the Performa Producers Circle; the Performa Curators Circle; and the Performa Visionaries. Media sponsorship has been provided by Art in America, W Magazine, Art Asia Pacific, Frieze, artnet, and Whitewall.

ABOUT PERFORMA 11

Performa 11, the fourth edition of the internationally acclaimed biennial of new visual art performance presented by Performa, will be held in New York City from November 1–21, 2011. The three-week biennial will showcase new work by more than 100 of the most exciting artists working today, in an innovative program breaking down the boundaries

between visual art, music, dance, poetry, fashion, architecture, graphic design, and the culinary arts. Presented in collaboration with a consortium of more than 50 arts institutions and 25 curators, as well as a network of public spaces and private venues across the city, Performa 11 will ignite New York City with energy and ideas, acting as a vital “think tank” linking minds across the five boroughs and bringing audiences together for brilliant new performances in all disciplines.

Founded in 2004 by art historian and curator RoseLee Goldberg, Performa is the leading organization 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. Performa launched New York’s first performance biennial, Performa 05, in 2005, followed by Performa 07 (2007), and Performa 09 (2009). www.performa-arts.org

Media Contacts

Ashley Tickle
Press and Marketing Manager
Performa
+ 1 212 366 5700
ashley@performa-arts.org

Concetta Duncan
Senior Account Executive
FITZ & CO
+ 1 212 627 1455 x232
concetta@fitzandco.com