

FUTURE OF IMAGINATION 8

International Performance Art Event. Singapore 2012



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Marla Bendini, collaboration with Ezzam Rahman
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Essays

Performance Art and the Quest for Authenticity

By Lee Wen

By some unforeseen serendipitous design the artists invited to this year's "Future of Imagination 8" are from Poland, Vietnam and China. One hasten to see them as countries with differing commitment to performance art almost like some mathematic equation not discovered yet in which the other factors are their commitments to communism and global capitalism. This has prompted our forum discussion we are planning to be entitled: "Solid Air: – comparative reflections on the intertwining of performance art and politics." A play of words derived from the quote taken from the Communist Manifesto: "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real condition of life."

The quote to me is a poetic call for authenticity that strikes a chord with the cause of performance art surely. The question underlying many long drawn discussions and conferences of how and why we do performance art or participate in producing this obscure activity and elusive entity seems to be the search for authenticity. This question enter our discussions often disguised or hidden itself behind related but secondary issues such as the definition and differentiation between various forms, methodology, spontaneity and hybridity of working strategies, or the politics of art sponsorship, etc. Often initiated by an intentional exercise as if to claim a special unique status for performance art in order to regain its edge on our jadedness over conceptually explained, ideologically bias, and inadequately historicized perception of art and culture.

Displaced post war baby-boomers

enlightened by liberating ideas in sociology, psychology and philosophy influenced artists from 1960's in embarking on strategies of art production that challenged conventional definitions of art and culture.¹ The idea or context of the work became of utmost importance more than the resulting material form or object, which was usually "secondary, lightweight, ephemeral, cheap, unpretentious".² The experimenting responded to new materials and inventions at the same time sprouting hybrid forms, exploring alternative spaces and locations, opening new directions in terms of collaborations, ignoring prevalent judgments of values based on market demands for stable enduring qualities for preservation or commoditization considerations. Together with conceptual art, process art, land art, and other time based art, performance art appeared to be motivated by a driven intention in seeking temporal and ephemeral nature of time-based medium as an intrinsic value in itself indicating its authentic purity.

The initial rejection by mainstream cultural institutions and academia and sometimes even severe official sanctions gave the new propositions added credibility if not heroic stances of radicalism and stoic resistance. These may somewhat become troublesome historical baggage throwing suspicions on its once shining pride if not proof of authenticity when one of its initial motivations was a conscious disregard for commoditization. Yet under growing dominance of consumerism and market capitalism and the desire to acknowledge significant works and preserving historical memory by transferring their ephemeral into longer lasting media like photography, film, video and sound recordings. The changed status of conceptual, performance art with its inevitable gradual ac-

ceptance and consensus may be due to society's changing perception of the intrinsic cultural values and potential contribution that an ephemeral work in the form of performance or any other time based art may have and deserving support. However detractors suspiciously look at them with being subverted by market enterprise entrepreneurs to create possibilities of profitable transactions if not becoming pawns for the propaganda of institutions that represent the powers that be and the established status quo.

Contextual derivations

The word authentic derived from Greek origins referred to the "one who accomplishes". It describes an action that refers to embodiment and participation in life, adhering to fidelity, actuality and fact, compatibility with a certain source or origin, accordance with usage or tradition, a complete sincerity and devotion without feigning or hypocrisy. At the risk of being seen as narcissistic and attention-seeking, performance art recommend a directness of the artist presenting himself as participant when producing and presenting the work itself. The creator and creation are one. This directness not only demands courage of overcoming stage fright but also the historical cultural difference of presenting one self in art making even as the idea of painting realistic images of human and in particular self portraiture may be so alien that most countries in Asia only started manifesting performance art in the late 1980's.³

In loosely roving round table open discussions on performance art often get caught up in the two recurring questions that tend to harp on repetitively:

1. Performance art is the antithesis of theatre, and closer to real life.
2. Performance art advocates an objective use of material, space,

time-frame and body instead of symbolic images of narratives that involves personal, private, ethnic or emotional meanings.

Advocates on both sides tend to claim superior or purity, which are merely different positions on a wide spectrum of art forms that performance art stand on. As much as any art form may also offer authentic expressions of human consciousness, performance may be more suitable in our time of extreme individualism and may manifest an immense permutation of creativity and imaginative expression.

It would be more fruitful if we learn to discern the nature of each artist's motivation in presenting the performance and evaluate its level of authenticity in relation to her personal, individual as well as social, historical and cultural background. Works of art in the form of traditional media as objects are said to possess nominal and expressive authenticity. Nominal authenticity is the correct identification of the authorship, or source and ownership history of an object, ensuring that, as an object of aesthetic experience should be properly identified. However most of our discussions deal with its expressive authenticity when appreciating or discussing the nature or character of the artwork as a true expression of an individual's or a society's values and beliefs.⁴ The analysis when applied in performance art sometimes become body specific, even including intimate details and privacy of the artist.

Historical authenticity

The evolution of human consciousness did not happen in isolation to form homogenous civilizations as most of us imagine and like to claim.⁵ Most civilizations would proudly claim their own originality and likely to also lean towards xenophobic inclinations and

differentiating those outside their borders as uncivilized barbarians. Thus when we compare origins of performance art in different countries it is more likely to be in a quagmire not only due to its iconoclastic avant-garde ideals but before all else being accused of imbibing foreign derivative influences that are of no relation to local contexts. Amongst the various countries I have worked in there are overlapping similarities how our societies functions and individual artists respond.

In China, performance art became a more apparent art practice in the late 1980's markedly complicated at the same time by public student demonstrations in Tian An Men Square in 1989. In the same year the closing of the national exhibition of "experimental art" (实验美术 *shi yan mei shu*) featuring a performance by artists Tang Song and Xiao Lu during which Xiao fired on their installation consisting of a telephone kiosk. The performance was ironically entitled dialogue (对话 *dui hua*) setting the image of notoriety of performance art in China.⁶ Performance art was closely watched in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai often harassed by officialdom sometimes to be held in clandestine situation as underground activity.

My first visit to China was in 2001 to participate in 'The 2nd Open Art Festival' organized by Chen Jin, Shu Yang and Zhu Ming. They were originally planning to hold it in Beijing. Invited international artists on arrival were shocked to hear plans were changed to take a 36 hour train ride out to hold it in Chengdu, Sichuan Province instead. There were news that their event was being closely monitored by the police after the first event held last year got shut due to complains of obscenity (i.e., nudity in public spaces). An unused brick factory in the outskirts of Pengshan County became the venue for 3 days, the second

day we had rain that forced us to work in the hotel we were staying which ironically had a police post in the corner of the same building. Hence it was unbelievable that we ran from Beijing like underground refugees and presented performances right in front of policemen without much hassles. After which some performances were presented in Leshan and Chengdu before we headed back to Beijing via a 44-hour train from Chengdu after 17 August 2001.⁷

When I participated in another event, 2nd DaDao Live Art Festival, Beijing in 2004, organized by Shu Yang and Wang Zhuyu, the scenario had changed tremendously whereby artists were performing in a sponsored spaces of a not yet occupied post-modern architecture complex with a hip name as 'Beijing Soho'.⁸ The event did hit some problems of being under threat of closure on the third day when one artist did a performance beyond the designated areas, while another one drew some blood in a clean operation under the care of a professional doctor and nurse. Negotiations went on with the sponsoring company's management while the artists were in a panel discussion and symposium held at Now Design Club, Dashanzi Art District. The final agreement was to carry on the festival but to ensure not to break the 3 conditions of not allowing violence (any blood letting), no pornography (no nudity) and no infringement of performing within the designated spaces. To my surprise the organizers were still willing to allow performances that knowingly would break the rules highlighted by the sponsors and to schedule them as the last in the program.

A closer look at Poland and Vietnam showed different characteristics from their introduction as they lie mostly outside the usual mainstream radar of art world perception. A comparison of

the historical context and how individuals invent the varied strategies juxtaposed within constrains and possibility of local contexts. The artists sometimes borrowed ideas as springboard to give examples of how hybrid attitude manifested as actions revealing authentic images beyond expectations.

Whereas the initial pioneers in fact challenged market capitalism and openly posed an anti-establishment stand, artists in China, Poland and Vietnam featured a cautious attitude as in most other communist regimes. The tendency to subdue such messages focusing on subtle implications that hopefully may have alternative readings the informed audiences can discern but would convey otherwise abstract if not absurd actions that mesmerized censors into allowing them without censure.⁹

While artists in Poland began working in tandem with the pioneering efforts of early initiators they did also maintained a softer stance of not offending or alarming an already censorious conservative oppressive social system. In 1978 an event called "Performance and Body" held in Lublin's Galleria Labirynt, marked the visibility of performance art as a legitimate art practice, at the same time artists in solidarity took care not to offend the authorities. Andrzej Mroczek, the then director of the Galleria Labirynt received news from the Municipal Culture Department that permission was withdrawn just one day before the scheduled event but decided to go ahead with the full program and was officially reprimanded later.

Vietnam has seen tremendous turbulent changes after years of war and only regained its full unification of North and South in 1975. Although performance art did not get any official approval and is still

not allowed or accepted in Hanoi University of Fine Arts, the most prestigious art institution of art education in Vietnam, performance art seem to be more actively explored by artists in Hanoi, in formerly North Vietnam. Veronika Radulovic as a guest lecturer had helped introduced information and knowledge to students attending Hanoi University of Fine Arts. Tran Luong as veteran artist, mentor and organizer helped keep possibilities of working in difficult situations. Their ordeals and struggles help us realize how the different historical context of the artists lead to make performance art such a special form of practice even today.

Romance into Truth

The quest for authenticity that led us to performance art have changed and shifted in recent years. As performance art becomes more visible in museums, biennales and other official institutions, it loses early status of critical resistance and radical anti-establishment status. The art market boom in China helped boost some artists to stardom if not also commercial success beyond expectations other artists continue struggling unabated without international exposure. As pioneer artists gain both academia and institutional recognition in Poland they pride themselves as pure anti-commercialism without submitting to art market unlike younger generation of performance artists who work in various media simultaneously. Vietnamese artists straddle between mixed receptions of performance art almost like an underground status yet sometimes seen a passé form in resistance strategy.

However performance art is just like any media of art with claims of authenticity even if the artist wants to preserve it's ephemeral quality or participate in its preservation be it for posterity or commercial value as it may be transferred

into various media. The measure of authenticity is not intrinsic in its form. Neither is it radical to create upheaval and mischief in itself. The romantic presumptions of performance art arouses so much regulatory sanctions from state authorities at the same time motivates many misguided young artists. Our loyalty to performance art shall be her suitability like any other media for the continued engagement in the production of art. The quest for authenticity shall continue as our playing fields gain grounds. We should embrace those who embrace us and continue the quest for authenticity. We shall learn to fill them by our ability to create poetry yet unseen and appreciate those who do so from different strangeness outside our known territory and learn languages of individual permutations of fundamental distinguishing features, if we are to be artists seekers of truth, authentic poets of action.

(Endnotes)

1 Carlson, Marvin (2003): *Performance: A Critical Introduction*; New York and London: Routledge; pg.80, 101-105

2 Lucy Lippard, (1973): *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972*; Praeger, vii

3 Lee Wen, *Chinese Thought And Its Relationship to Portraiture: a comparative overview* http://issuu.com/leewen/docs/chinese_thought_and_its_relationship_to_portraiture

4 Dutton, Dennis; "Authenticity in Art," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, edited by Jerrold Levinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)

5 Campbell, Joseph: *Primitive Mythology, Occidental Mythology, Oriental*

Mythology, Creative Mythology (Masks of God) Penguin, (re-issued 1991)

6 Berghuis, Thomas J.: *Performance Art in China, Hong Kong, and Timor*; 8 Limited, 2006, 310 pp.

7 The 2nd Open Art Festival was held in Pengshan County, Leshan and Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China, 8 - 17 August 2001, Organized by Chen Jin, Shu Yang and Zhu Ming <http://www.araiart.jp/sichuan.html>

8 2nd DaDao Live Art Festival in Beijing, China, 13--17 July. 2004, Curators; WANG Chuyu, XIANG Xishi, Francesca Jordan, Director; SHU Yang. Cooperation; Live Art Development Agency, Trace Gallery (UK), SOHO China Ltd.; Support; Arts Network Asia, Wales Arts International. <http://www.araiart.jp/dadao.html>

9 My knowledge of performance art in the context of Poland and Vietnam are mostly based on the information from conversations with artists, first hand observations from working and the essays published in this catalogue page 11 to 14 and 20 to 29.

"What's 'Left'?"

"Not 'Right'"

- a concise overview of Performance Art in Poland

by Paulina Kempisty (in consultation with Waldemar Tatarczuk)

After World War II, the Communist Party seized power in Poland, which strongly affected art and its official distribution. Although socialist realism ceased to be the governing art trend already in 1956, even after that date the mainstream state galleries still were compelled to exhibit art that was "safe for the socialist society". Until 1989, major state galleries (the so called Bureaus of Art Exhibitions, "BWA") had been managed by the Central Bureau of Art Exhibitions ("CBWA") in Warsaw. A CBWA's task was to ensure that exhibitions in the branch galleries were compliant with the officially approved aesthetics. They usually presented traditional output of artists belonging to the mainstream and officially endorsed Association of Polish Artists ("ZPAP").

First performances in Poland were shown at the end of the 1960s, and their heyday fell to the 1970s and 1980s. The artists who used performance art as a significant if not major means of expression were: Zbigniew Warpechowski, Jerzy Bereś, Jan Świdziński, Krzysztof Zarębski, Przemysław Kwiek, Krzysztof Zarębski, Zygmunt Piotrowski, Janusz Bałdyga, Jerzy Onuch, Marek Konieczny, Krzysztof Jung, Andrzej Dudek-Durer, Natalia LL, Maria Pinińska-Bereś, Ewa Partum, Teresa Murak. Some of them called their performances: actions, demonstrations, shows, or works. The term "performance" as referred to art became to be recognized only in 1978 with the international event, *Performance and Body*, which took place in the Galeria Labirynt in Lublin. The festival gathered many artists Polish and foreign artists. Andrzej Mroczek, the then director of the Galeria Labirynt, recalled: "The day before the presentations, when all the artists had already arrived, I received an official communication from the Municipal Culture Department that the communist authorities withdrew their previously

issued permit. What did we do? Anything that we could, that is, simply ignore the message. The programme was carried out in full. Drinking coffee during breaks at a nearby café...we felt "individuals on duty" in long leather coats breathing down our neck. A few days later, I was officially reprimanded."

One of the leading Polish researchers of contemporary art, Piotr Piotrowski, is of the opinion that art at that time rather avoided political dispute.¹ Comparing the situation of Poland to that of other states under the communist rule, such as Czechoslovakia or Hungary where the regime was more repressive, Polish artists enjoyed greater freedom of expression. Still, many Polish artists inclined toward the autonomy of a non-involved work, although some alluded to the socio-political situation. From today's perspective, it is difficult and groundless to assess artists' attitudes, some of whom adopted a more critical, anti-establishment, conflicting or "repair" strategy, sometimes guided by the naive belief that the system might be improved. The network of official galleries exhibited progressive projects, including performance. When studying the productions of the 1970s, there are almost no artists who directly referred to the political or social situation in the country. The most conspicuous artist was Jerzy Bereś; his actions were almost entirely focused on the criticism of the political system and Poland's position in the socialist world. The artist developed a unique artistic language, alluding to the Romantic myth, deeply ingrained in the collective Polish consciousness. His actions were exalted, purifying, and sometimes ritual. Bereś avoided direct criticism, yet the message as in "The

1 P. Piotrowski, *Awangarda w cieniu Jalty. Sztuka w Europie Środkowo – Wschodniej w latach 1945-1989*. Poznań 2005.

Prophecy" (realized between 1968 and 1989) was transparent for the public. He often used the national colours, bread and wine. In almost all actions by Bereś, he performed naked (as the first artist in Poland), using his body as the most important medium. In 1988 in London, he realized an action, "The Image of Poland," in which he appealed to the Romantic myth of martyrdom and sacrifice of the Polish nation and the many years' deprivation of freedom, at the same time highlighting the topicality of this situation.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Przemysław Kwiek and Zofia Kulik formed an artistic duo, KwieKulik. Their actions responded to events that directly affected them and were associated with the everyday nuisance of socialist realism. One example of that was the three-part performance of "Activities with the Head" staged during the Performance and Body Festival in the Galeria Labirynt in Lublin. The activities addressed the problems of oppressed individual, persecution and influence exerted on society by the authorities, as well as the limitations to freedom of expression.

Janusz Bałdyga did his first performances in the early 1980s. His actions were a commentary on the political situation in the country and "manifested artist's attitude towards the current political problems in the country: 'General Centre', 'A Show of Strength', 'Property.' They had an unequivocal political dimension and tackled the broad problem of dictatorship, uniform and uniformity... In 1982 Bałdyga put on a performance, "The Polish Tatra Mountains: A Normalization Project," which he continued until the suspension of the martial law in 1983. The action referred to "the normalization of the situation in the country" and symbolically pointed to the impracticability of such a solution. In 1984 Bałdyga, accompanied by Zygmunt Piotrowski, put on a performance, "The Use of Force." It was staged inside a gallery in which three enlarged photos of the artist were suspended "unfit for an ID card" and painted red on the back. In each

of the photos, Bałdyga covered a different part of his face. During the performance, he walked among them and read warning messages: "Force may be used", or "Warning! Force will be used"²

In 1983 Zdzisław Kwiatkowski, in connection with the political situation in Poland, did (still as a student) a performance, "The Changing of the Balance of Power." All of his subsequent performances would clearly appeal to the Polish political reality. The title of another performance, "Between the Left and the Right" referred to the political division of the country and the person's engagement in the system, the sense of entrapment and decision-making. The performance, "Aggression," (1985) was a manifestation of artist's disagreement with a situation in which a person is forced to back a particular attitude: to be in opposition, to be servile, or to be indifferent.

A different strategy to the one outlined above was followed by Zdzisław Sosnowski who took a critical look at the slogans calling for the building of the "socialist consumer society." He was ironic in appealing to the nostalgia for the developed countries of the West and their prosperity, which, according to the bold declarations, was to be grafted onto the Polish reality. The artist impersonated the characters created by the media and demanded by the society, for example, a football player, a successful athlete (the "Goalkeeper" series of 1975). His work revealed the "mechanisms of the construction and promotion of the myth, aesthetisation and the 'enchanted' of information in mass culture... the political myth cultivated by the communist media, the undisputed narrative of socialism, constructed by the authorities by means of censorship and media control."³

² E. Gorzdek, http://www.culture.pl/baza-sztuki-pelna-tresci-leo_event_asset_publisher/eAN5/content/janusz-baldyga

³ Ronduda, Ł. *Sztuka polska lat 70. Awangarda CSW ZU Warszawa 2009*, p. 324.

Artistic interventions often seen in the streets of different Polish cities were made by Polish artists belonging to the Academy of Movement started by Wojciech Krukowski in Warsaw in 1973. Some of the group's big names were: Janusza Bałdyga, Jolanta Krukowska, Krzysztof Żwirblis, Andrzej Borkowski and others. One of the basic pursuits of the A.R. team was the exploration of the boundaries and mutual relationships of art and everyday life. The substance and the starting point for their action were events observed in the everyday life in socialist Poland, such as standing in a line, or asking people's ID in the street by the militia officers without any apparent reason. The casual audience were both spectators and also participants of their activities. Such was the case with "Newspapers" (1977), when the artists were coming up to the newsagent's one after another to buy a newspaper and, after skimming it, dump it in a trash bin; some other actions were "The Line Going out of the [Butcher's] Shop," or "A Happy Day" of 1976, during which the A.R. artists walked out to the "gloomy" streets in colourful outfit wielding baskets of fruit. Their actions criticized, though non aggressively, the political reality of contemporary Poland.

Another issue is the art done by women, who in the 1970s constituted a minority in the Polish art scene. The same was true in performance art. Polish artistic circles in the 1970s and 1980s were rather sealed for novices and strongly patriarchal. Four performance female artists were an exception: Natalia LL, Maria Pinińska-Bereś, Teresa Murak and Ewa Partum. How did they manage to surface as artists? Probably because their artistic program was very coherent, consistent and incontrovertible, and at the same time, they were very determined. They could not be overlooked. Their art, by addressing taboos such as eroticism, femininity and feminism, was a manifestation of struggle with the cultural policy of the totalitarian state.

Maria Pinińska-Bereś could not accept the

limitations ensuing from the strict gender divisions. She refused to accept the female role of a housewife and the treatment of the female body as a sexual object intended to satisfy male's needs. In her sculptures and performances, there are typically feminine paraphernalia: corsets, napkins, aprons, kitchen appliances, household devices and references to the shape of the female body. In 1980 she did a performance in which wearing a pink apron she was laundering her daughter's nappies in a wooden wash tub. In the end, she pegged out the "washing" on a string. Pink letters written on the nappies formed the word "feminism". She also created unambiguously political works. One of them, "Vivid Pink" was held in November 1981. In Kraków's Planty Park, right in front of the BWA Gallery, she planted a rose bush: then she was asking the gathered public, "Do roses bloom in pink when the spring comes?" A month later, the military authorities seized power in Poland, the martial law was declared. Teresa Murak made her artistic début in 1972 while still a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Back then, she initiated a long-continued series of "Sowing". A memorable event was a two-hour walk of the artist clad in a cape covered with a thick layer of plants along the streets of Warsaw ("The Procession" of 1974). This was one of the first Polish actions in public. Again in 1975, this time in the Galeria Labirynt in Lublin, she spread seed all over her body covered with a long wet blouse and walked the streets of the city; the action was titled, "The Lady's Smock."

In 1974 Ewa Partum realizes a performance "Change 1974", which is a voice in the feminist discourse, which aims to challenge the stereotype of looking at a woman solely through her body. During the performance, the make-up person "aged" half of her face. The next step was the performance, "The Change: My Problem Is A Female Problem", staged four years later. This time, the artist was lying naked among the audience and her

make-up person "aged" one half of her body. Having finished her performance, Ewa Partum announced herself to be a work of art. A noteworthy occurrence was her intervention during the opening of the exhibition *Polish Avant-Garde 1930-1990*, held at the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Berlin in 1992. Ewa Partum expressed her opposition against the exhibition being dominated by men (the only showcased artist was Katarzyna Kobro). Partum handed out to the audience envelopes with a text inside: "Polish avant-garde female artists have their big chance only as a corpse."

The year 1989 saw radical changes in the political sphere - the first fully democratic elections to the Senate (the upper house of the Polish Parliament). What has changed? The reality - from communism to capitalism, and so came the era of consumerism. Censorship has been abolished. New galleries have started to mushroom. Owing to an open-minded approach of new directors, many state-funded galleries have begun to present contemporary art. New art magazines have appeared (though some have failed). New curators and new artists have started to work their way up and now can make the best of the new opportunities and freedom to act. The artistic movement have begun to gain momentum. Gradually, the art market has emerged and opened up especially to young artists. The fraternity of performance artists has grown to include the younger generation, which, sorry to say, has not enhanced the status of Polish performance art. Surprisingly enough, the political and economic shift has not caused any major breakthrough in the art of action. The so-called socially involved independent theatres were in a different position. Their opposition to the system has become pointless as they have "lost the enemy." Performance artists did not face this problem.

In the output of the younger generation of artists references were seen to the absurdities of everyday life; the activities of Oskar Dawicki or Cezary Bodzianowski

are heavy with sarcasm and mockery, and offer an alternative to the mainstream art. Another fact is the departure of performance artists from placing the body at the heart of their art. The importance of physicality has changed. Perhaps it is ascribable to the ubiquity of goods, items, rapid media development and technology. The result is the appearance of a new language of art, yet at its early stage. Of course, they are still artists for whom the body plays a pivotal role in performance: Artur Grabowski, Paweł Kwaśniewski, or the Referees Group. However, they must be very cautious to steer clear from banality because, to put it straightforwardly, "the sight of blood" does not work any more like it used to - the language of the past is now worn out, and the heroic time of performance is now over.

The growth of the art market at large, albeit relatively slow, has an impact on performance. Art has become a commodity, and performance artists strive not to lose clout. They make films based on performance and sell them. Although new, there is a visible development of education in performance art, increasingly incorporated into various programmes run by Polish art galleries. There is a growing number of lectures, presentations and workshops of performance art. The art schools in Poznań, Kraków, Wrocław and Gdańsk offer courses focused on performance art. The University of Arts in Poznań has recently launched Poland's first Performance Art Studio supervised by Janusz Bałdyga. We are sure this is a harbinger of major changes in performance art in Poland and the ensuing measurable results.

Note: Original Polish text can be found on the website:

<http://www.foi.sg/paulina-polish-essay.html>



KwieKulik, "Działania na głowe", during "Performance and Body" festival, BWA Lublin, 1978, photo by A. Polakowski



Michał Bałdyga, during Performance Platform Lublin festival, 2009, photo by A. Skrzypek



Zygmunt Piotrowski, during Performance Platform Lublin festival, 2009, photo by A. Skrzypek



Jerzy Beres, "Sztuka a rzeczywistość", BWA Lublin, 1983, photo by A. Polakowski



Zbigniew Warpechowski, "Champion of Golgotha", Lublin, 1978, photo by A. Polakowski



Jan Swidzinski, "Zamazywanie", BWA Lublin, 1983



Marta Bosowska, during Performance Platform Lublin festival, 2009, photo by A. Skrzypek

Let's Get Back to the Language of Performance Art

By Zhou Bin

When a butcher works, he only needs to be 'steady, accurate and relentless', whereas an artwork has to be context-based and the artist needs to take into account the necessity of being 'steady, accurate and relentless' and the uniqueness of the process.

Once when I was chatting with a foreign artist, he stated outright that Chinese performance art is not good enough. After the conversation, I wanted to figure out why he thought that way. I assumed that it was the difference of context that made him, while analyzing Chinese artists' works, ignore the signified of the work and focus on the language itself. And this somehow reveals the problem of a lot of artworks. To some extent, this artist's words remind me of these problems. Objectively speaking, many Chinese performance artworks are indeed merely emotion releasing; artists apply the performing method in a primal way of mechanical diversion and they do not constantly ponder over nor practice the performance art from the perspective of art medium. Art does not serve as the most effective tool to intervene into reality. For artists, it is important to realize the drawbacks of their working methods and they should not extol art neither depreciate it.

For me, in the process of creating performance art, at a spiritual level, no solemn themes would be more appealing than a drop of water. We often find that only because a piece of performance artwork concerns some vast political and social issues, its artistic quality would

be so highly praised that the value it embodies would not be challenged. This is absurd. Suspecting and questioning is the nature of contemporary art. But this nature should not degenerate into a sentimental moral impulse, which turns the artwork into a mere propagation of values and a statement of political stand. Moreover, we should be wary of an excessive pursuit of a widespread recognition and understanding, which derives from a need to peach and makes art flattering and grandstanding. Art does not have to convey an explicit meaning. A good piece of artwork should not only concern a life experience and social reality, it should also be engaged in exploring and experimenting on the language of art. The ultimate judgment of an artwork's value falls into the level of art itself and its language. The issue of language has always been a fundamental one, which all artists confront while creating their work. Art, as a way of expressing, has an independent value of existence. Imaging if artists' creation and practice are short of a repeated scrutiny into the language of art, how void the work would be. In my opinion, as long as the artistic creation originates from one's own life experience, it will, without any doubt, be linked to the vein of the social reality and it will also, if combined with a thorough deliberation of the method of language of performance art, develop artworks that are both authentic and powerful.

The emphasis on the importance of language does not urge artists to have an attitude of 'language centralism' or

become addicted to creating a unique language of art. It also does not push them to merely invent a novel visual experience, to diligently construct an aesthetic style so different from that of other culture, or to simply subvert prior languages. What it really concerns is the renovation of language and also a proper use of it. Artists think about the language of performance art with a skeptical and critical attitude and their ultimate goal is to find an effective way to observe and express. This is based on our demand to ponder over and speak of the reality and it is a reflection of problems surrounding us.

Underlining the significance of language also does not mean to stick to the formalism, to remove the attention from problems in reality or to lead the spirit towards a kind of 'escapism philosophy' of ancient Chinese scholar-bureaucrats. The emphasis on the creativity and uniqueness of art language is meant for allowing an artwork to state out all it wants to express and penetrate into beholders' inner world. In terms of communicating artworks, this requirement for the language of performance art is appropriate, even unique and irreplaceable. We often find that when some artists respond to an issue through their works, their performance turns out to be too 'artistic' that the method and the concept cannot blend well. As a result, beholders would feel confused and reject the work distastefully. However, if an artwork is expressed in a proper language, the language would be authentic and unique while the artist's thought and the concept behind the artwork would be precisely conveyed.

While making a performance artwork, the method can be flexible and variable

according to the context. Artists should create wisely and confidently and use every useful way of expression. Language evolves in speaking and it is always in an 'uncertain' status. Here what's essential is that artists integrate their emotion and thought into the creation. They need to forget the stylized module of visual vocabularies and even to abandon their desire to produce 'an excellent work'. At this moment, the language has diverted from the dimension of creation to that of selecting, judging, observing and contemplating objects. The technique of performance art renders characteristics such as diversity and openness. It seems that there is no obstacle, but there will be no making without breaking. Much practice has to be done in order to reach this and here is where difficulties lie.

Theodor Adorno once said that "to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric." This sharply points out that the temptation to set apart language is shameful and an evasion from the reality. Adorno's warning is not an excuse to give up the experiment on language; on the contrary, it let us understand that we need to respect the real feeling and experience, to keep observing and questioning the realistic context and to convey our attitude and thinking via an accurate, concise and sharp language.

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Note: Original Chinese text can be found on the website:

<http://www.foi.sg/zhoubin-chinese-essay.html>

Urgently seeking V..... Vitamin, Visibility, Vitality - Performance Art in Vietnam

by Tran Luong

In 1993, German artist Veronika Radulovic came to Viet Nam. She took a position at Hanoi Fine Arts University (HFAU) as a long-term lecturer of Avant-garde western art. During her teaching program, Performance Art was introduced as a kind of the avant-garde movement of Western. From 1994, Truong Tan (artist, lecture of HFAU at that time) and his student group: Nguyen Van Cuong, Nguyen Quang Huy, Nguyen Minh Thanh began to practice performance.¹

For me, it was in 1993, at Holland, that I saw Performance Art for the first time. A local artist presented this performance work. Then, I started to think and research about Performance Art. I did my first performance work during my installation show titled "Khoi Thuy" / "Beginning", at Nha San, Hanoi in 2000.

In terms of history and society of Vietnam, Performance Art is an important means of therapy for me, to treat the physical and psychological barriers, to create and state the highly creative states of my inspiration - not only in Performance Art work but also for my practice in the forms of experimental art in general.

During 45 years, since 1945, Vietnamese art was pressed into a functional framework and for illustrating only. "The truth" is always just a luxury concept. Even today it is dangerous for anyone if they want to touch the truth. Self-censorship syndrome is a status quo that also remains until today. Most artists in Vietnam will close themselves into the works that are not prohibited. There are only few honest and brave artists, but they either are isolated, living in poverty, or even face threats to be arrested or imprisoned. The academic art forms, especially fine-arts, as sculpture and painting, are easy to be censored, because they are clear objects/ artifacts. This situation make us say "never write what you dare not sign!"

Since the period of "Open door", the Vietnamese art scene seem to develop

into a "distressed situation". On one side is the market oriented art serving tourism, a characteristic "insensitive yet flamboyant" kind of art, and on the other side, something dry and strange made by order from the government.²

The appearance of Performance Art in Vietnam clearly has provided an alternative way to somewhat providing the artist's desire to be liberated, to be soaring and to create honestly so that art may reflect the mood of citizens (but perhaps only of a small number of avant garde artists). Also, it can somewhat also overcome the difficulties for local artists when they have not enough material resources or facilities for their art practice.

Along with the role of an organizer for contemporary art event, and just as an artist, I noticed that Performance Art has useful features that fit my circumstances and living condition in Vietnam. Performance Art meets the requirements to pass through barriers that the other forms of visual arts are facing, such as censorship, lack of funding, lack of professional facilities for art, lack of consulting and technical supports.

In terms of form, Performance Art can be practiced widely in all circumstances; there is always opportunity for dialogue (interaction) with the masses of any classes. Performance Art is conceptual art, so its language should be diverse and highly metaphorical, that to give them an opportunity to access the art in both the five senses which contributes and addresses the severe shortage of educational knowledge, information and academic knowledge about art in Vietnam even today.

So far, Performance Art has not been taught in art schools; it has not received funding from the state/government and did not have any legal corridor/law in the State culture management system that refer or support the Performance Art. Even, all artist's applications for permission (to

show) still has to send to the Department of Theatre (instead sent to the Department of Fine arts and Photography), and most applications are not approved!

Until 2007, Performance Art has always been forbidden; It was regarded as an "extrinsic art form" of "underground art". At the National Youth Arts Festival in late 2007, performance arts was officially accepted to be performed in public for the first time, but the young artist's works had to be presented to a Council of censorship before allowing it to be presented. The performance art works may be flexible but may even be forced to adjust, as a result these works become very bad (the top performance artists do not participate in any events organized by the state/government, which is expressed in a boycott, and actually, they also know that their performance works would never to be approved, even though they are accepted for showing at all).

Although the social conditions in Vietnam are more difficult as mentioned above, the number of students and young artists who like Performance Art is still growing. The study of performance art is still entirely in the form of self-education or through the experiences of the senior artists, through exchanges with international artists, through books and information, and largely through the internet. The young performers in Vietnam now consider Performance Art as an attractive infinite and expressive potential practice area. Performance Art is also stimulated artists self discovery by challenging psychological barriers as a result of several decades of living in a society of artificially enclosed introversion.

The greatest advantage of Performance Art when compared to other forms of visual art practices are its diverse possibilities as a language of metaphorical expressions. Performance Art not only allows the explanation of history, the human condition and plight, the attitude and desire in forms that can be flexible, insinuating, profound and subtle but also could be in very direct ways that may be shocking and provocative.

As the current trend shows performance art in Vietnam seem to manifest in two possibilities:

- The first comprises young upstarts with populist art works that contained clear meaning, easy to understand, often refers to "mild" social problems or entertaining form. They are easily accepted by the government.
- The second includes the artist who have consistently work in the direction of conceptual art, and whether directly or metaphorically, their works also highlighted the problems and addresses questions with a vision of humanism, based on historical, social and political reflection of their society.

(Endnotes)

1 In e-mail conversation, Veronika Radulovic commented that the official post she held was a DAAD lecturer of modern art" there was no word for contemporary art and she introduced Performance Art as one aspect of Western/International Art. She invited Amanda Heng, from Singapore to visit the HFAU during her trip to Hanoi in December 1995. After participating at Amanda Heng's performance Truong Tan (artist, lecturer of HFAU at that time) and some students began to practice performance. All the performances took place in private areas. Except the performance "Mother and Child" by Truong Tan and Nguyen van Cuong, which was held during the exhibition of Nguyen Minh Thanh at 29 Hang Bai (which is a governmental art space) and the first one at an official place. - In this program I also invited Nezaket Ekici later... I was the first international guest lecturer there... performance art was not "allowed" there at this time. So, everything was a bit "undercover"... but for sure, the interest in performance art was high and really funny: the first "official permitted performance" there, was your (Lee Wen) water performance ... I introduced performance art in my lectures by Videos. (Abramovic/Ulay - Signer - all the polish and Hungarian friends... fluxus artists and more...) which was a good program on basics, especially Abramovic and also Signers performances like really interesting video-art- (I mean, more than only a document) ... this is a difficulty ... but there was no other way to introduce performance art in Vietnam (within the art academy) (And for Amanda, they accepted it, but there was no permission for her (performance) at all) you understand"

2 Editor's note: In 1986 economic reform were initiated to encourage "socialist-oriented market economy" under a program name of Doi Moi (Renovation) often seen as the beginning of open door policy in Vietnam.



Amanda Heng (participants: Truong Tan and students from HFAU)
University of Fine Arts Hanoi
December 1995
Photos: Nguyen Quang Huy



(Top left and right)
Truong Tan
Inside
International Container Art Project 1996
Kopenhagen / Denmark
Photos: Niko Ewers



(Middle right)
Nguyen Van Cuong (in cooperation with
Til Schönherr)
Motorbike Sound-performance
Jazz Club Quyen
Hanoi 1998
Photo: Veronika Radulovic



(Bottom right)
Truong Tan / Nguyen Quang Huy
Water-Buffer
Moc Chau Village 1996
Photo: Veronika Radulovic

Anything Can Happen between Now and Then...

By Veronika Radulovic¹

Amanda Heng glues a piece of paper onto the long wooden desk in the director's office at the University of Arts in Hanoi. Then she divides a Chinese cabbage into pieces and places the leaves on dark brown plastic chairs. She says: "Everything can happen between now and then", which is translated into Vietnamese for his fellow students by **Nguyen Minh Thanh**. Amanda then signals to the students to climb onto the chairs and starts to tear up various Vietnamese newspapers: *Lao Dong*, *Van nghe tre*, *The Thao Van Hoa* and *Ha Noi Moi*, among others. She hands out the pieces randomly to the students. Some of them start reading, others giggle. A mélange of sounds takes shape. What happens then? Eight students stand on the chairs, a piece of newspaper in their hands, a cabbage leaf in front of them. Two girls suppress their laughter. **Amanda Heng** disappears under a blanket with a black and white flower pattern. Slowly, the ghostly looking blanket creeps across the director's desk. It gets up and collects the newspaper fragments. Amanda's hands clutch at thin air when suddenly, the black-and-white blanket rises. The scene ends. There is applause.

What is all this? Is this a performance? For a while this question remained unanswered. Many years later, we will laugh about the fact that the first art performance at the University of Arts in Hanoi took place in the director's office. It was the best-equipped room at the university. It had a television set, which was at my disposal for video presentations. "I was really afraid he would enter" says Anh Mai. "Me too", was my response. What remained was a feeling of having experienced something extraordinary, something that differed from everything else. And it had not been carried out secretly but in the presence of witnesses: a couple of students and a videotape that recorded exactly 12 minutes and thus became a small ironical relic of itself. Questions about whether this performance made sense or not, questions which

should have been asked and answered, remained unasked. This gentle and doubtlessly unspectacular performance on 8 December 1995 initiated one of a series of endless whispering and private exercises that helped Vietnamese artists to understand each other and to remain creative beyond the officially ordered and controlled forms of art.

One of the most popular private places of that time was **Salon Natasha**, the apartment of **Natalia Kraevskaia** and the studio of her husband, the artist **Vu Dan Tan**. There, the most varied forms of art thrived, regardless of what was officially expected. There, artists developed freely, without regard for rules or regulations and without fear of being classified by what was internationally understood as "performance art".

But now, through this performance at the University of Arts, an art form was truly entering new territory. It was precisely the location of this unauthorised happening, the director's office, which underlined the fact for those present that something had happened beyond the function of art and its doctrine, and beyond all the endeavours for reform which the academy stood for in a special and singular way. It was simply breathtaking.

The only artist and teacher of the University of Arts who had taken part in the performance was **Truong Tan**. In the years to come, he would increasingly experiment with this new medium. Maybe the word 'experiment' sounds too academic. He simply took pleasure in doing things spontaneously and acting according to the situation. He was narcissistic; he wanted to be the centre of attention. His personality fulfilled in a special way one of the basic requirements of performance art, that the artist does not give form to something abstract but to himself.

In the following years, many different

performances took place in several areas, mainly in the relative safety of rural areas (Mong Cai and Moc Chau) but also in private homes (Hang Chuoi and Pho Yen Thai). **Nguyen Van Cuong**, with **Til Schönherr**, discovered and performed, on the first floor of Quyen Van Minh's jazz club on Lake Hoan Kiem, the diverse sounds that a motorbike could possibly make. In 1995, **Truong Tan** used an empty bottle of La vie for an "Army Performance", as he called it, on the beach of Mong Cai. A first series of photographs was made there as well. However, the attention raised by the photo documentation could not protect the performance from its innate transitory nature. Performances continued to live on in stories that were told, and the most bizarre versions of seen and unseen works became the topics of conversation. Myths were created, and it became crystal clear that a performance was neither a static affair nor could it be repeated. It was unique. Like the weather or a football match, a performance emerged as a non-linear chaotic system, and incidentally, put Vietnam's monopolistic cultural policy offside.

The lack of a clear definition of the term, and its imprecise and poorly definable form, allowed us to call our occasional actions simply as a "performance". This term was very soon used in an inflationary way among artists and students. Suddenly, carrying a painting through the crowded streets of the ancient quarter of Hanoi, or a simple lunch, was a performance. A new ease and joy accompanied the new experience, and it seemed as if art had at last broken free of its rigidity and become a living process.

This is one side of the story. Performance art was and remains a slap in the face of official state art. Perhaps this was the reason it received so much attention and became a constant topic of discussion, in spite of the fact that some performances were of low quality and would have passed unnoticed had they not happened in Vietnam. This became clear with **Nguyen Minh Thanh's** installation in the state gallery at **29 Hang Bai Street**. This was where on 9 November 1996,

Nguyen Van Cuong and **Truong Tan** did their performance *Mother and Son*, which radically called into question the claim of the cultural administration (associations, universities, museums) to be sole arbiters of the concept of beauty in the arts. In the performance, a supine body on the floor was painted with blood (in fact, it was only red paint!) What followed was a range of very different reactions — from disapproval to admiration. But such questions as 'How will you make a living if you do something like that?' raised, for the first time, the issue of support for art beyond official state art and the commercial market. Most people regarded the new tendencies with suspicion, and distrust towards my teaching assignment increased.

Nonetheless I continued my work as a DAAD lecturer at the University of Arts. Among other things, I intensively conveyed the knowledge of this controversial art form. Videotapes of Yves Klein, Yoko Ono, Abramovic/Ulay, Roman Signer and last but not least, of Joseph Beuys sweeping out the Düsseldorf Academy of Art, were received with astonishment and were highly debated. The same was true of Polish and Hungarian performance art of the eighties, and of Fluxus artists and their happenings. It clearly showed how in the sixties, performance art in Europe had developed parallel to a dissatisfaction with politics and its approach to art.

Later, I also showed video performances. The students and artists in Hanoi should learn and know as much as possible. I showed *What is the Difference between a Hong Kong-produced Violent Pornographic Video and a Performance Showing a Clothed Man Beating an Unclothed Woman?*, a video which had been produced for the documenta 8 in Kassel. Where is it possible to raise such questions? And where is it possible to see a "real" performance? A performance by artist Man Bui was staged in 1997 at the Tran An Gallery, but to see it was, however, only possible with a personal invitation and it was very difficult to receive one.

Sometimes, we were lucky. In 1999, the

American-Vietnamese artist **Nguyen Cao Hung** did a performance — open to everyone — in the art gallery of a French gallerist in Trang Tien Street. On 17 November 2000, in Gia Lam, many students and artists witnessed *Universal Harmony*, an impressive performance put up by Dao Anh Khanh to welcome the new millennium. This dance-performance, reminiscent of a huge theatrical open-air production, clearly demonstrated the artist's strive for harmony between state and society. **Anh Khanh** used fire, sound, light, objects, the rigid and the transitory. He showed himself in slow motion. The public participated and was enthusiastic. People were proud to have been there, to have experienced the event. It was regrettable that for students and artists there were few opportunities for comparison, so that for many, Anh Khanh's performance came to define performance art. Some students, though, began to use the expression 'body-art performance'. I was happy that they had learnt to differentiate the performances.

But all the time I have the feeling that apart from conveying knowledge, something new was under way. Very cautiously we discussed many different detailed questions, and I constantly referred to international art history. It was, however, of little use to rely on current and established terms such as 'body-art', theatrical elements, entertainment, sound or Fluxus, thus calling for their legitimacy, as it helped neither the progressive nor the critical student. Of what use can there be to tell them that in the beginning of the last century some artists in Europe, mainly the Dadaists, had declared chance to be the principle of their action and themselves to be the art? Chance and the negation of academic rules, and the perspective of the suspension of time and space, were clearly non-academic aspects. Why then, should they find their way to the University of Arts in Hanoi? It seemed that performance could not be taught.

My teaching of international art in Vietnam initiated a process that clearly showed that some artists were ready to protest and to call for a new freedom of art, and

their art in particular, even if it was a risk. There was also some opposition against the production of art for the state and the newly developing Western art market. All these movements favoured and drove the desire for change and reform, and although they were indefinable, these movements constituted a breach of aesthetic rules. Imposed ideologies and stories, state images and state roles were no longer the focus of attention; regard was given to individual actions and chance occurrences that contributed to the initiation of a process of self-discovery and a new international orientation.

Little wonder then that, in the beginning, Vietnamese performance art mainly took place abroad. This was true of **Truong Tan's** performances. He participated in the International Container Project in Copenhagen (1996), in a performance in the Kunsthalle Bielefeld in Germany (1996), in Singapore, and in an internal school project at the Städelschule Art School in Frankfurt/Main (1996), to name a few. There was also talk that **Tran Luong** staged performances in New York. As a result, many young artists wrongly assumed that international contemporary art had to be a performance.

This misunderstanding seemed to be confirmed by **Truong Tan's** performance at the exhibition, *Cultural Representation in Transition — New Vietnamese Painting*, organised in Thailand in 1997 by **The Siam Society Bangkok**. On 30 January 1997, the Bangkok Post published a large-format photograph of **Truong Tan**. This publication turned his performance, which was staged in collaboration with the Thai artist **Suraphol Panyawachira**, into an official statement. Phataranawik writes: "Entitled *Flower*, this piece of live theatrical art comments on censorship in my country." In the performance, the petals of a marigold are scattered on the floor amid 12 boxes. While Suraphol tries slowly to arrange the mass of flowers into a big petal, the Vietnamese artist, clad in black, angrily puts the flowers into each box and tapes them shut. This action is repeated again and again to represent the frustration of artists in Vietnam. "Our

creativity is limited", Tan explains to a Thai artist. Phataranawik's article ends: "With Vietnam opening to the world after almost five decades of isolation, it is clear that an artistic renaissance has begun, unparalleled in the country since the French started the first fine arts school in Southeast Asia in 1925."

Although I continued my efforts to explain fundamentals in my teaching programme, a major renaissance did not take place immediately. A dadaistic poster claims: "Dada is everything — dada will win" and "Art is dead, long live the artist". What can art achieve? On 28 January 1997, I hung the Vietnamese translation of this sentence by Marcel Duchamp (I took great care in pointing out that Duchamp had lived from 1887 to 1968) on the walls of my seminar room at the University of Arts. *Nghe thuat da chet! Nghe sy muon nam!* Yes, this was radical. Immediately, one of the students took a picture of the poster. Where did it lead to? Is it really important to learn that everything surrounding us can be art? I was learning too. And I never knew for whom the student had taken the picture.

Shortly afterwards, an "incident" occurred, which raised a great deal of attention and led to a public discussion, that was clearly attributed to my/our bad influence. Two young men whom I did not know had, among other things, spilt blood (this too was only red paint!) on a gauze-bandaged body. The commotion that arose was less about the spilling of blood than that having been an unauthorised performance, as the incident was called. Again, this happened in a place where desecration would not be tolerated, that was *Van Mieu*, the Temple of Literature. Like **Amanda Heng** before them, **Nguyen Van Tien** and **Tran Anh Quan** had chosen a "more-than-wrong" place for their performance. But in contrast to **Amanda Heng's** earlier performance, which only left small traces probably because it took place in the framework of one of my lectures, this performance provoked a major heated and ostentatious public discussion about the beauty and social values of art and its teachings, and not least of which the harmful and

detrimental influence of the international art world.

The provocation incited by the two artists succeeded and had a beneficial result: question upon question was raised and new speculations arose.

But were these heated and very emotional discussions of any importance to a new artistic approach? How did red paint "blood" find its way into the Vietnamese art scene? Was it modelled on the *Vienna Activists*? It is a fact that **Truong Tan** had met the action artist and Professor **Hermann Nitsch** at the Academy of Art in Frankfurt am Main. But **Nitsch** had used real blood in his happenings. Did the Vietnamese artists lack courage? One could investigate this case like a detective ... and follow the clues ... and so on and so forth.

Without a doubt, the most important performance artists of the first generation were **Truong Tan**, **Nguyen Minh Thanh**, **Nguyen Quang Huy** and **Nguyen Van Cuong**. They were influenced by the works of international artists of the 20th century (in the beginning only through videos and catalogues shown in my seminars) and by the artists whom they were later able to meet personally. However, the great renaissance of performance art in Vietnam only started a few years ago. Further developed and integrated into teaching processes and international congresses, symposia and biennials, what were once private and spontaneous performances became artistic forms and strong political statements, full of power, energy and imagination. Some Hanoi artists gained support from international cultural institutes, such as the **Alliance Francaise/L'Espace**, the **British Council**, and since 1998, the **Goethe Institute Hanoi**. Scholarships to study abroad financed by the **DAAD** or grants from the **Asian Cultural Council (ACC)** helped various artists, like the sound performers **Vu Nhat Than** and **Kim Ngoc**, to create new facets and forms of performance art in Vietnam. **Vu Nhat Tan** collaborated frequently with **Tran Hau Yen** **The** who spent four years at the Peking

Academy of Arts. Further collaborations have occurred, among others, between **Kim Ngoc** and the Canadian video artist **Brian Ring** who lives in Hanoi.

At the end of the nineties, the still insufficient educational situation brought some young artists into the private home of artist and antique collector Nguyen Manh Duc. Thanks to the initiative of **Tran Luong**, **Nha San Duc** became a place for artistic experiments. Within a very short time, it became a meeting point for all who sought answers to their questions. At Nha San Duc, one could behave confidently, have a good meal with others and feel happy. There was a concentration of experiments with new artistic possibilities, including performance art. Later, artists also worked with video performances, digital images, and sound and noise performances. The audience grew. **Tran Luong**, who with **Nhat Tan** had created a full-fledged multimedia film and sound performance, was the main initiator of many of the events. International curators arrived, showed films and gave lectures, and every young artist who was prepared, for whatever reason, to meet the new international art world in Hanoi showed up. Everybody wanted to be part of the new wave. And sometimes it seemed as if the artist wanted to state by his presence: "Look, although I paint what is required of me, I do belong to the others, the international artists!" Slowly and almost imperceptibly, these young artists acquired a kind of monopolistic position. They admitted some and excluded others, allotted leading positions to some and looked down on others: the official and commercial artists, and the large number of indecisive ones. "We are the artists. Only we are international." A group of artists was established which represented the exact opposite of the official Association of Artists. A free art scene had developed.

I do not view this attitude as laughable; in fact, it is far from it. That attitude was and still is a necessity. Vietnamese artists are right to position themselves in new and different ways, to dissociate themselves from the official line and in particular to make use of performance art.

It is, finally, the only way to overcome the common view, not only in Vietnam, that only those objects created to last forever, to be valuable, beautiful, decorative and saleable can qualify as relevant art for the nation.

Tran Luong, the most important initiator of performance artists in the artists' house Nha San Duc, that is, the second generation, was also the curator of the exhibition, *Red-Green-Yellow*, held at the Goethe Institute in Hanoi. This multimedia exhibition opened on 3 November 2003, and it was there that the artist **Nguyen Minh Phuoc** showed a previously unseen combination of video, installation and performance. He even went one step further, initiating a dialogue between the participants (in his video documents) and the spectators (visitors to the exhibition). His theme was the life of a certain social group, the labourer or migrant worker, a group living on the fringe of Vietnamese society. Migrant workers reveal the negative aspects of a booming city like Hanoi and it is a very risky to draw attention to this fact. **Minh Phuoc** observed these workers with his video camera, but this was of no importance as long as he established no relationship with them. At this point, his original idea changed. He felt that it was no longer possible to simply show videos in the Goethe Institute. He invited these workers to come to the Institute and write their wishes and dreams directly on the walls — to become performance artists before the eyes of the public. Another important signal was set.

Finally, on 1 March 2004, **Nguyen Minh Phuoc** and **Vu Huu Thuy** opened the first self-administered and non-commercial gallery for experimental art in the centre of Hanoi — Ryllega Hanoi (sponsored by Dong Son Today Foundation Hanoi). Apart from **Nguyen Minh Thanh**, the artists **Nguyen Manh Hung**, **Nguyen Quang Huy**, **Pham Ngoc Duong**, **Nguyen Phuong Linh**, **Tran Anh Tuan**, **Nguyen Anh Tuan**, **Truong Tan**, **Nguyen Tri Manh** and **Le Vu** belonged to this gallery. Events, installations and performances were organised at Ryllega Hanoi at

irregular intervals. International artists came and showed their works in the new gallery, for example, **Antonia Perez** from New York, Vietnamese-American artist **Kelly Le Lan Phuong**, **Varsha Nair** from Thailand, **Magne Furuholmen** from Oslo, **Stefan Kurr** and **Juliane Heise** from Berlin and Singapore performance artist **Lee Wen** who lives in Tokyo. Earlier, **Lee Wen** had done a water performance at the Hanoi University of Arts in the presence of hundreds of visitors and which I had organised in the framework of a thematic exhibition. This was another important, new and singular event but another story.

The development of performance art in Vietnam reached its most recent peak in 2004 when **Tran Luong** organised the first International Performance Festival **Lim Dim** (sponsored by Denmark/Vietnam: CDEF), where 30 artists from Japan, Great Britain, France, Germany and Singapore, as well as many of the abovementioned Vietnamese artists participated. **Lim Dim** (Half-closed Eyes) describes the state between dream and waking and thus hints at the early days of whispered tones in countless hidden corners, but it also shows a new self-assurance. The festival was widely covered in the press and fostered new networks. Another festival, *Snaky*, held in Hanoi, Hue and Saigon, and organised by **Pham Duc Tung** (sponsored by Art Network Asia (ANA)) followed in 2007. In the same way, Vietnamese artists participated in various performance festivals in China, Cambodia, France and New York in the United States, as well as *Ket Noi* in Singapore in May/June 2008.

In August 2008, Ryllega Hanoi abandoned its fixed location in Hanoi and is now active in various places and cities. Contacts were and are intensified and extended, but not only within Southeast Asia. For example, the project *Ryllega Berlin* curated and organised by Veronika Radulovic and Stephanie von Spreter (sponsored by ifa-Stuttgart, Eurasia Culture Exchange gGmbH and Dong Son Today Foundation Hanoi) with the performance artists Truong Tan, Nguyen Quang Huy, Nguyen Tuan Anh and Nguyen Minh Phuoc, as well as

other international artists took place in the glass pavilion of the Volksbühne Berlin in September 2008. The slogan is: "Talk to each other, express yourself. And do not repeat yourself!" At last it has arrived — performance art in Vietnam!

As many people may know, my story in Vietnam is a very personal one. I apologise to all the Vietnamese artists whom I have not mentioned. The international artists in Saigon, like **Jun Nguyen-Hatshushiba**, **Dinh Q Le**, **Rick Streitmatter-Tran**, my friend **Hoang Duong Cam** and many others — I have not forgotten. Also, I have to mention **Ly Hoang Ly**, the Saigon artist whose performances I have never seen, but whom I consider to be one of Vietnam's most important female performance artists. My view of this unwritten piece of Vietnamese art history is that of a friend and an artist from Germany. Everyone has only one story to tell and that is his or her own. Like a performance, it cannot be repeated. And it is neither right nor wrong.

Veronika Radulovic – Berlin, August 2008-08-09

Note: Amanda Heng's performance took place during one of my authorised tutorial courses which had been contractually agreed upon between the University of Arts in Hanoi and the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). For me, it constituted the best alternative to all the videos on contemporary art that I was allowed to show in my courses, and I hope the directorate forgives me for having "desecrated" its office for twelve minutes.

(Endnotes)

1 This essay was excerpted from original by kind permission of Veronika Radulovic, first published in "Essays On Modern And Contemporary Vietnamese Art", 2009 Singapore Art Museum, Lee, Sarah; Nguyen Nhu Huy (Eds.)

Invited Artists

Angelika Fojtuch (Poland)



Vabangue, Santiago, Chile, 2010. Photo courtesy of the artist

Fojtuch is an international visual artist and performance artist. From 1998-2005, she had studied at four Polish Academies of Fine Art: in Torun, Krakow, Poznan and Gdansk. She graduated from the Department of Sculpture and Intermedia at the Academy of Fine Art in Gdansk, Poland in 2005.

Her art works have been presented at worldwide exhibitions and festivals, for example. NIPAF11, Tokyo & Osaka, Japan, 7a11d Fado Center. Toronto, Canada, OPEN Festival in 798 Art Zone, Beijing, China, Deformes. Santiago, Chile, EPAF Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, Poland, The 2nd Biennale of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki, Greece, The 2nd Biennale of Young Art MMOMA in Moscow, Russia, Interrupted connections Zacheta-National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, Poland and last but not least, represented at NADA Art Fair in Miami, USA, VIENNA FAIR in Vienna, Austria and SUPERMARKET Art Fair in Stockholm, Sweden.

Her work is in the collection: Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz and mentioned example, at Flash Art, Kunstforum, Basis Wien, Artfacts.net, Culture.pl, Wikipedia.pl, Tekstyliabis-dictionary of the polish young culture.

Fojtuch had conducted performance art workshops for international participants, for example, in Bezalel Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Jerusalem, Theater College in Jaffa, IDK The Academy of Fine Arts in Tallinn, School of Art and Design Berlin Weißenhofsee, Fine Art Academy in Gdansk. Wrote for "Pedagogia de la Performance" a book published by Valentin Torrens. In 2006, she founded PORT PERFORMANCE - Forum for Performance Art.

Noah Warsaw (Poland)



Shu-Fa Classes, Guangzhou, China, 2011, Photo by Nisi Lin



Born in 1947, Warsaw graduated from Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw from 1968-74. From the early 70s, Warsaw was active in Polish movement of independent culture (A-B Group, Student Centre Dziekanka, Warsaw) wherein promotes the idea of education in creative process. [Biography erased from art evidence by courtesy of ASA, Art Service Association, Koln, Germany; final performance at 25th anniversary of Black Market International, Lublin 2010].

Since 2009, working under the name of Noah Warsaw, he promotes ART FOREGROUND, new field of creative activity as alternative education worldwide.

www.eastern-gate.eu

Waldemar Tatarczuk (Poland)



To leave Europe, Goryeong, South Korea, 2010. Photo by Shim, Young-chul

Waldemar Tatarczuk was born in 1964 and lives and works in Lublin, Poland. He is a performance and installation artist, art curator. He is also the founder and curator of Performance Art Centre in Lublin (1999-2010), and is currently the Director of Labyrinth Gallery in Lublin (since 2010).

He has been active as a performance artist since 1988, taking part in performance art events throughout Europe and Asia including: Infracion Paris, in France; Navinki Festival in Minsk, Belarus; Asiatopia Festival, Bangkok, Thailand, KIPAF, Seoul, South Korea, and Differences Festival, Warsaw, Poland.

His curatorial projects include: 'Art Kontakt' Performance Art Festival (Lublin), European Performance Art Festival EPAF (Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, Poland), Performance Arsenal (Arsenal Gallery Bialystok, Poland), 'Open City' Festival of Art in Public Spaces (Lublin, Poland), and Performance Art Days (Kiev and Lviv, Ukraine).

www.waldemartatarczuk.blogspot.com/

Tran Luong (Vietnam)



Photo by courtesy of the artist.

Born in 1960, Luong is a visual artist and curator from Vietnam. He finished his studies at the Hanoi College of Fine Arts in 1983; in the same year, he founded the artist collective Gang of Five. His progressively abstract works have been showcased in group exhibitions at the Goethe-Institut Hanoi, Vietnam; the Museum of the Tropics in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art 2002, England; and the Fukuoka Asian Biennial, Japan. For about ten years, Luong has also been concentrating on installations and performative art, which much like his paintings draw from experiences and problems in his own life, for example the loss of traditional values that his generation is confronted with. In 2000, Luong founded the Contemporary Art Centre in Hanoi, which he represented as art director until the end of 2003. He is considered to be the most important mediator of contemporary art in Vietnam; he has organized various workshops for young artists and has curated performance festivals and exhibitions, among others in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut Hanoi.

Phu Luc (APPENDIX) (Vietnam)



Ban Dai 6 Thuoc, Vietnam, 2011. Photo by courtesy of the Phu Luc

The six members – Duc, Song, An, Bac, Dang, and Toan – all studied and practiced fine arts and had been friends long before they formed the group. The group's formation, however, couldn't be discussed about out of context from the contemporary art situation in Vietnam. The artists only started to understand each other in a substantial way when they had the opportunity to regularly work from the beginning of 2009 at 25studio, one of very few spaces in Hanoi at the time where young artists were welcome.

25studio attracted a rapidly increasing number of young artists with its core artists and exciting activities. The studio, however, also quickly became a wide-open space with uncontrolled activities and loud events. These developments were against the will of artists such as An, Toan, Duc, and a few others. At the end of 2009, the above-mentioned six artists were asked to have a joint exhibition at the studio, which turned out to be the last time they ever worked there. This also marked a beginning of their closer relationship.

The initial step leading to the group's formation started with joint-performance art experiments by Duc, An, and Toan. Discovering that their shared understandings and perspectives on art, the six artists then decided to form APPENDIX group.

Activities and Elements

From the beginning, APPENDIX's intention has been to focus on quiet, unpublicized art practice and experiments, instead of exhibitions and fine arts events. Their practices and discussions within the group resemble simple sketches conducted internally alone.

At the end of 2010, APPENDIX members spent an intense week at Almaz Studio in Hanoi to practice and experiment without any audiences. Here they came up with many sketches that later became the bases for several of their performance pieces.

Immediately afterwards, the group performed "Anatomy of an assembly line with an error" which marked the beginning of the group, although members had yet to announce publicly of their formation.

APPENDIX pieces seem to sidestep usual performance art practices in Vietnam in general, and the group rarely received applause from the wider audiences.

APPENDIX works were typically criticized for looking more like theatre than performance art, for the fact that they lack spontaneous emotions supposed to occur as performance artists improvise, and that they usually prolong in a flat, monotonous manner with repeated activities. Those characteristics that APPENDIX has been criticized for, however, are intended to be the group's central performance concept.

For APPENDIX, either performance art or theatre, either a painting or just simply – a line of poetry, an image or an object – all have the capabilities to express surrealist feelings. The group intends to express with silence; with moving rhythms; with objects; with materials; with states ... -- with everything chosen to appear in their performance works.



Anatomy of an assembly line with error, 2011. Photo courtesy of Nhasan Studio



Sound of Dust, Hanoi, Vietnam, 2011. Photo courtesy of the Phu Luc

Zhou Bin (China)



Chase the Sun, China, 2007. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Zhou Bin was born in 1970 and focused on making art upon graduation from Art College in 1990. In Beijing, Zhou Bin worked in oil painting until 1997, when he moved to Chengdu. From then on, he has worked primarily in performance and new media, as well as installation.

Zhou Bin is a prolific artist, with nearly one hundred pieces of performance art, installation, and video work produced since 1998 in various locations including China, Korea, Singapore, Holland, England, Spain, and Israel. Zhou Bin also works in collaborative projects. In 2007 he opened UP-ON Live Art Space for the specific purpose of promoting live art. In 2008, Zhou Bin curated the first UP-ON International Live Art Festival, inviting over 40 artists from all over the world to perform and exchange ideas on live art. In 2009, Zhou Bin began producing *Celebration—1/6 Comment on Freedom*, a multi-media, multi-artist ongoing and touring live art happening. Of late, Zhou Bin is meditating on and developing performance art theory. He believes that Chinese performance art must transcend the limits of the individual body, and must also make a contribution to international performance art discourse.

Andrée Weschler (France / singapore)



Black #5. Poland, 2011. Photo by Diana Kotczewska

Andrée Weschler's artistic endeavours focus on using the physical body to explore the boundaries of acceptable social constructs. The performing body is used as a tool for discovery, often becoming material in itself. Her work also attempts to challenge the audience into reading her performance of bodily differences

Born in France, she has been living and practicing her art in Asia since 1995. Her formative visual arts training were in Singapore, Australia and France. At Les Beaux Arts de Paris, she worked in the atelier of Annette Messager. Since 2000, she has been invited to participate in international art events in Asia and Europe. Her exhibition participations include The 4th Guangzhou Triennial China 2011, The Asian Pulse 10+1 Bangkok Culture & Art Center Bangkok Thailand 2011, The National Review of Live Art Glasgow Scotland 2009, "The Park—The Contemporary Artists in Asia 2008" Related Art Exhibition of Yokohama Art Triennale Japan 2008, Eros-Arrows by the London Biennale 2004 England, International Eco-Environment Art Exhibition Seoul Arts Centre Art Gallery, Seoul, Korea 2002.

Her art practice encompasses Performance Art, Drawing, Video Art, Photography and Installation.

www.andree-weschler.com

Jason Lee (Singapore)



An Exchange Visit to the Past and Present #2.
Singapore, 2012. Photo by Lim Shengen

Born in 1985, Jason Lee graduated from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 2006 with Diploma in Visual Communication, specializing in photography design. In 2010, he obtained a BA (Hons) in Fine Arts from the University of Huddersfield, UK.

Although his primary medium is photography, he also works with installation and performance. His current works deals with wide issues that revolve around the urban environment and contemporary society that inspires him. His artistic interest lies in the areas of urbanization, abandoned traditions, and sub-cultural lifestyle. Art to him is a platform to explore issues that are being misunderstood or overlooked. He has participated in group exhibitions and collaborations. He is based in Singapore and is a present member of The Artists Village.

www.jasonlee.sg

Jeremy Hiah (Singapore)



The White Crocodile. Singapore, 2011. Photo by Jason Lee

Born in 1972, Jeremy Hiah began his involvement in the arts since 1993. His works mostly deal with social questions, based on his personal experiences and background as a multi-disciplinary artist. Hiah had explored widely different art media and materials in painting, sculpture, installation, performance and collaborations with many artists from different fields. Hiah has presented his works actively in Singapore as well as in various countries around Asia and Europe.

He is also an active organizer and member of The Artists Village and Sculpture Society Singapore. Former 2001 Vice President of The Artist Village and 2005 Vice President of Sculpture Society and currently the Artistic Director of The Artists Village residency program. Since 2004, Hiah had established Your MOTHER Gallery, which is an alternative art space that supports emerging artists and international artists-network programs. Hiah was the artistic director for Fetter-Field Performance Art Event 2006, 2007 and 2009, which saw the project presented in various public venues and locations in Singapore.

Kelvin Atmadibrata (Indonesia / Singapore)



The Smoker Who Prays To A Burning Boat. Bandung, Indonesia, 2012. Photo by Vincent Chow

Kelvin Atmadibrata examines the notion of strength and power of rejects. He transmits this subject into personal identities as a gay man, a lost Indonesian and a fan boy.

His practice includes drawings, mixed media, installation and performance. Constantly researching into the notion of gender and sexuality, Kelvin pays particular attention to masculine attributes, queer culture and erotica. This is reflected on a long-term initiative, rainbowartsproject (RAP). It focuses on queer subjects in forms of exhibitions, documentations and researches.

Kelvin's works are currently experimenting on eastern erotica and pornographic materials through kawaii visuals.

www.kelvinatmadibrata.com/

Marla Bendini (Singapore)



Surrogate N°7: (), Sweden, 2012, Photo by Vincent Chow

Born Ong Boon Kok, Bendini Junior in 1986, “Marla Bendini” – artist.performer.visionary – is a transgendered identity created in 2007 as an amalgamation between art and life. Her multidisciplinary & highly personal works has become her signature via documentation and exhibition of real life experience both private and public, self-portraits, performance and social activism.

Her first self-titled exhibition “Marla.” (2008) was presented in a transsexual bar in Pattaya, Thailand. Sponsored by Fridae.com, Asia’s largest LGBT portal, she presented “Conversations between father and son” (2010), a multimedia installation- performance over 10 days, supported by The Substation Gallery, Singapore. She exhibited and performed in Supermarket 2012, Stockholm Independent Art Fair, sponsored by Riksställningar / Swedish Exhibition Agency.

<http://marlabendini.yolasite.com/>

Rubin Hashim (Singapore)



Rites of Adoration. Singapore, 2008. Photo courtesy of the artist.

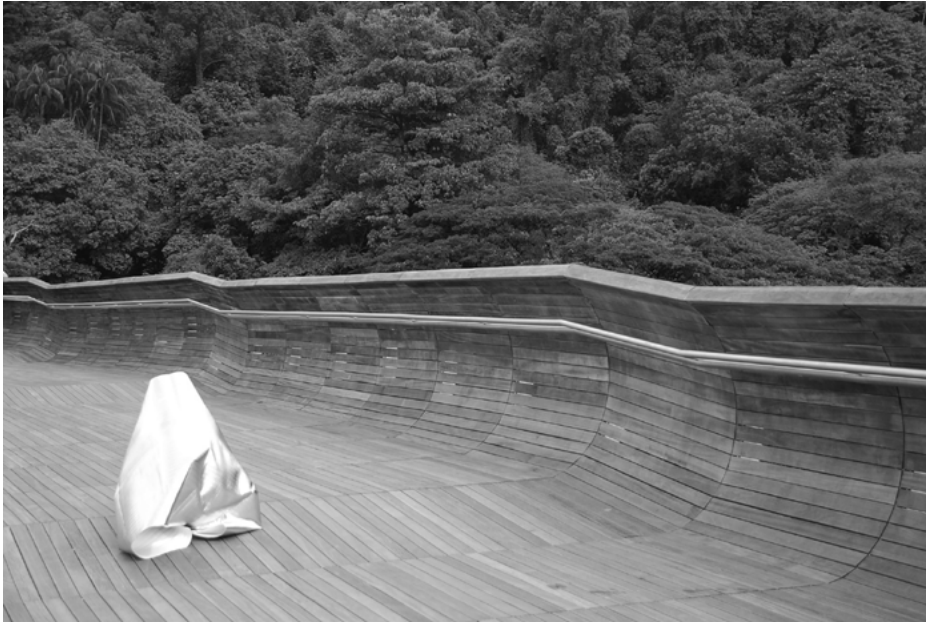
Rubin Bachtar Hashim was born the same year French philosopher, Michel Foucault, passed away and the Aids virus was identified.

In the summer of 2001, he enrolled himself into LASALLE, College of the Arts in Singapore. In the time spent in school, Rubin picked up varying creative skills such as metallurgy, carpentry, photography and audio/video production. Inspired by the polymaths of past, Rubin is a practitioner who revels in his ability to utilise various media.

In 2008, Rubin had founded an independent gallery/performance venue called Furor-Space in Singapore. He served as its founder and director for nearly two years before the initiative fell victim to the commercialisation of Haji Lane which led to absurd rental inflations. It was in this short but fruitful period that Rubin discovered a flair for curatorship and writing.

Today, upon graduating with his Master of Arts, Rubin continues to pursue his creative endeavours by day and tends to his musical adventures at night. While he is currently and primarily based in Singapore, Rubin has firm intentions of inducting his initiatives into the American scene and bridging cultural developments between the two countries. He is also keen on pushing his writing career further into the realm of the acclaimed.

Vincent Chow (Malaysia / Singapore)



Weight. Singapore, 2012. Photo by Kelvin Atmadibrata

An artist currently based in Singapore, Vincent sees art as a process of constructing a (private and abstract) realm to question and to reason subjects of his interest. At a meta level, he is interested to observe as an outsider, his personal experience of art making. Vincent works with painting, installation and performance art. He had solo shows and participated in group exhibitions and performance art events.

www.vincechow.com

Contributors



Artistic Director / Curator (international artists) Jason Lim (Singapore)

Jason Lim was born in Singapore in 1966. He studied at Central St Martins College of Art & Design, 1989-1992, graduated with a BA (Hons). Attained his Master of Fine Arts Degree from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (LaSalle College of the Arts), 2001-2003. He's repertoire of works encompasses ceramics, photography, video art, installation art and performance art. He has organized and created various platforms for alternative art practitioners to meet and collaborate. He was co-Artistic Director and Artistic Director of Future of Imagination 2 & 5 and 7 & 8 respectively, an international performance art event held in Singapore in 2004, 2008, 2011 and 2012 respectively. As a performance artist, he has been invited to present performances in many international performance festivals in more than 20 countries. In 2010, He was invited as guest artist to join performance art collective, Black Market International, in their 25th Anniversary celebration in a tour of Poland, Germany and Switzerland. In 2007, he presented his work, Walking Sticks, at the 4th World Ceramics Biennale in Korea winning the Juror's Prize. In the same year, he presented Just Dharma and Light Weight at the Singapore Pavilion in the 52nd Venice Biennale. As a ceramist, he works has been collected and commissioned by various public museums, art institutions, corporate companies and private collections both locally and internationally. Jason's artistic projects, residencies and travels, had been recognized, supported and awarded with numerous grants and awards from the National Arts Council since 1994.



Curator (Singapore artist) Kai Lam (Singapore)

Kai Lam is based and works in Singapore. Although his artistic background is in sculpture, Lam's art practice is interdisciplinary, translating his ideas through the mediums of texts, drawings, paintings, object installations, sound works and performances. The artist's work is inspired by the human condition and social environment, making art with his observations of daily life through the artist's current works-in-progress. Since 1999, Lam had exhibited and performed in many countries in Asia, Europe and the Americas.

Engaging in art organizational work and artists initiated projects form an essential extension to Kai Lam's versatile art practice. As president of alternative art group, The Artists Village from 2000 to 2003, he initiated "Artists Investigating Monuments", presenting installations and performances in various public sites. This was later presented again in Singapore Art Museum, 2004 and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and House of World Culture, Berlin, 2005.

In 2003, He had co-initiated critically acclaimed projects, "Future of Imagination" (FOI) an international performance art event (2003) and he is presently the artistic director of "Rooted In The Ephemeral Speak" (R.I.T.E.S), which is a regular platform that focuses on developments and discourses on performance, sound and time-based art, with an objective to explore and present performative art projects, exhibitions and events in galleries, museums, site-specific spaces and alternative venues.

Editor / Writer Lee Wen (Singapore)



Lee Wen, a multidisciplinary artist and one of Singapore's most internationally recognised contemporary artists and organizer of art events in Singapore. He has been exploring different strategies of time-based and performance art since 1989. Best known for his Yellow Man series of work, Lee is also one of the pioneers of performance art in Singapore. Through various constructed personas, his works allow visitors an insight into his roles as artist and provocateur, whose very being is motivated by a strong conviction of justice and idealism, with a persistence to stay true to the self in a highly structured world. A contributing factor in The Artists Village alternative in Singapore and the Black Market international performance art collective, Lee has helped to initiate and organize events such as Future of Imagination and R.I.T.E.S. - Rooted In The Ephemeral Speak, in order to platform, support and develop performance art practices, discourse, infrastructure and audiences in Singapore.

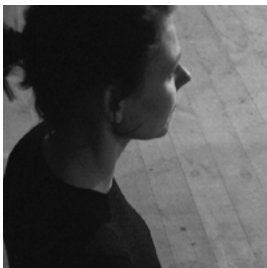
Symposium Moderator Daniela Beltrani (Italy / UK / Singapore)



Born in Rome, Italy in 1968, despite a classical education and upbringing, she abandoned her dream of becoming an archaeologist and opted for a more practical degree in Law. After becoming a volunteer guide within the Singapore Art Museum in 2009, she pursued studies of contemporary Southeast Asian art by gaining a Master of Arts in Contemporary Asian Art Histories in 2011 from LaSalle CIA, Singapore.

Since 2010 Daniela has curated several exhibitions and written articles and essays for art publications and catalogues.

In June 2011 she set up a performance art platform by the name of S.P.A.M. Her interest in performance art both as spectator and performer allows her to explore the Self and its different levels of communication.



Writer
Paulina Kempisty (Poland)

Paulina Kempisty is an art historian and artist working with the Labyrinth Gallery, Lublin since 2010 and runs the Performance Art Foundation since 2009. She also helped initiate the "Open Archive" project, the first archive of performance art in Poland since 2008. (www.openarchive.pl) Since 2010, Paulina Kempisty has been actively curating, writing as well as presenting her own practice of performance art. Her writings have been published in various Polish art magazines, catalogues and blogs, presentations and talks about performance art in Lublin, Wrocław, Piotrków Trybunalski.



Writer
Veronika Radulovic (Germany)

Veronika Radulovic went to Vietnam to study lacquer art in the early 1990. She became lecturer at the Hanoi University of Fine Arts 1994 to 2005 sponsored by DAAD-German Academic Exchange Service. She helped establish a resource center and library of contemporary international art at the University. Radulovic also worked as a mediator between German and Vietnamese art and organized the exhibition "Lacquer, Earth, Stone" in 1995 at the Museum für Lackkunst, Münster (Germany), contributed to the "Gap Vietnam" project at the House of the World Culture Berlin (1998) the Ryllega Hanoi Project at the Volksbühne Berlin (2008) and in 2009 the ifa (Institut für Außenbeziehungen) Exhibition: Connect Kunstszene Vietnam. Also assisted organising different exhibitions, for example: at Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, Kunsthalle Bielefeld and Substation, Singapore. She continues to work as an artist organizer with close relationship and knowledge about Vietnamese contemporary art and social life after "Doi Moi" which is part of her publication: "Sicherheitsabstand" in 2005. She lives and works in Berlin.

Programme

31st August to 5th August 2012

Reliquarium – an exhibition of performance art relics
Venue: Chan Hampe Galleries, Raffles Hotel, Singapore.
Time: 11.00 am to 7.00 pm (closed on Monday)
Website: www.chanhampegalleries.com/
Curator: Daniela Beltrani

31st July and 1st August 2012

Workshop: Time, gesture and memory
conducted by Waldemar Tatarszczuk
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: Goodman Arts Centre, Gallery

3rd August 2012

Workshop: Connected and Isolated
Conducted by Tran Luong
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: Goodman Arts Centre, Gallery

1st August to 5th August 2012

Future of Imagination 8 – international performance art event
Venue : Goodman Arts Center, gallery, 90 Goodman Road, Singapore 439053
Time: 7.00pm until late
Website: www.foi.sg
Website: www.goodmanartscentre.sg
Curators: Jason Lim and Kai Lam

5th August 2012

Solid Air – comparative reflections on the intertwining of performance art and politics.
Venue: Glass Hall, Singapore Art Museum
Time: 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm
Speakers: Tran Luong, Waldemar Tatarszczuk, Zhuo Bin, Lee Wen
Moderator: Daniela Beltrani

Credits & Acknowledgement

Future Of Imagination 8

Production Team

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Curators: Kai Lam and Jason Lim

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Reliquarivm - a collection of performance relics, was curated and organized by Daniela Beltrani, an exhibition held in conjunction with Future Of Imagination 8.

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www.foi.sg