

MUSEUM AS HUB: IN AND OUT OF CONTEXT

AUGUST 8, 2009–JUNE 2010

FIFTH FLOOR

“Museum as Hub: In and Out Of Context” marks a new development in the Museum as Hub program. It reveals a partnership of arts organizations looking to pursue experimental methods of exhibition, communication, and collaboration, and considers the consequences of being part of a “hub”—what it means to displace conversations and activity from elsewhere to New York. Major considerations of “In and Out of Context” are the challenges of producing and exhibiting work in differing international contexts.

“In and Out of Context” is conceived as an evolving exhibition that incorporates works commissioned by Museum as Hub partners as well as works by an extended network of artists and organizations from around the world. Central to this presentation is the design of the Museum as Hub space by Choi Jeong Hwa that serves as an “envelope” for the coming year—a flexible, playful, yet functional space that is an active zone for viewing, discussion, and activity. The Museum as Hub space will be activated by public programs such as a seminar series, Propositions, and other informal open discussions. Additional works, projects, and discussions will be introduced to “In and Out of Context” as the project develops to offer new perspectives and demonstrate the evolution of ideas.

Choi Jeong Hwa

Museum as Hub design, 2009–10

Commissioned by the New Museum, New York

The space in which you are standing has been conceived by Choi Jeong Hwa to serve as an “envelope” for the coming year of Museum as Hub programming. The commission transforms the Museum as Hub space through a dynamic use of color and an innovative use of common materials to create flexible zones for viewing, discussion, and activity. Choi’s diverse practice includes architecture; graphic, industrial, and interior design; art direction; and art making. He lives and works in Seoul.

Young Whan Bae

Library Project - 來日 (Tomorrow), 2009

Cardboard and wood models for proposed public libraries
Collection Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, Ansan;
Artsonje Center, Seoul
Courtesy the artist

In his ongoing, utopian *Library Project - 來日 (Tomorrow)*, Young Whan Bae transforms used shipping containers into public amenities. With a goal of manifesting art as progressive social alternatives, Bae creates a self-sustaining system in which resources and funding from each commissioned library generate an additional library in a rural area lacking in public resources. Part of the artist’s larger “Rainbow” series, which includes *Homeless Project* (2000), a handbook for homeless citizens of Seoul, *Tomorrow* offers information and recreation to a remote community in which the notion of communion has been weakened by mobilization and displacement. Bae’s library is conceived to be a core medium that can resuscitate, reactivate, or catalyze a sense of communion in local communities. In his presentation for the New Museum, Bae presents furniture prototypes in corrugated cardboard and handmade scale models representing the modular system he adapts for each library location. Utilizing the official cultural space of the museum to promote and potentially actualize a small-town library demonstrates the artist’s purposeful quest for an art with social function.

John Bock

PARA - SCHIZO, ensnarled, 2008

Two-channel video, color, sound, 40 min
Produced and presented by Arko Art Center and Insa Art Space of the Arts Council Korea
Edition 1/5, Collection Arko Art Center, Seoul
Courtesy Anton Kern Gallery, New York,
and Klosterfelde, Berlin

PARA - SCHIZO, ensnarled is inspired by the physical and cultural landscape of Korea, where the two-channel video was planned, produced, and premiered in 2008. The production is the result of a dynamic collaboration and improvisational interplay between John Bock, the two commissioning institutions, and a Korean-German film crew. In *PARA - SCHIZO, ensnarled*, Bock’s first two-channel work, two figures on distinct but parallel paths converge, clash, destroy, and imitate each other in a cycle of mutual interplay and action that almost suggests a love story. The film is a sequence of situational frames of emotional and formal symmetry in which images and words are intricately composed between the two channels to create a structurally complex yet cohesive, multilayered whole. The script is like a series of word-collages—re-composed classical, modern, and imagined references, including Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* and the big bang theory—forming an existential language experiment that is nonetheless highly communicative. Actors become empathetic participants, intuitively responding to Bock’s text and built environment, where seemingly makeshift objects play a central and active role.

Cairo Residency Symposium

March 25–27, 2009, at the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo

Video documentation

Courtesy the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo

What are the goals of artist residencies? What is “cultural dialogue” and how are its terms affected by politics and funding (or, the politics of funding)? The ability of Middle Eastern and African citizens to move both within and without the region is severely limited by arcane visa restrictions, yet in the past few years, global economics and politics have resulted in increased interest from cultural institutions in the West. As a result, residencies have become a major avenue for mobility, encouraging artists in the Middle East and Africa to travel to Europe, while European artists and curators have become frequent visitors east and south.

These issues and more precipitated the Cairo Residency Symposium, organized by Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art and the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture. The event brought together eighty participants—representatives from arts institutions and funding organizations as well as artists and curators—for presentations and group discussions on the aims and challenges of international residency programs in the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, while simultaneously serving as a platform for future collaboration. Alternative residency models, south-south exchange, research vs. production, and education emerged as central concerns during the three-day forum.

Rana Hamadeh

INTERROGATIONS 1–5 *when they ask me I'll introduce them to you*, 2008–09

Five-channel audio, text

Courtesy the artist

Commissioned by the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

INTERROGATIONS 1–5 *when they ask me I'll introduce them to you* is an audio work based on conversations between Rana Hamadeh, a “foreign” artist living in the Netherlands, and a number of other artists (working in the Netherlands, or Beirut), in which they contemplate the “motives” behind Hamadeh’s work. The conversations start as a game and flirt with the absent work and the discovery that every word said is the only material of the work, to be analyzed in the coming sentence. The game erupts into a kind of revolt against Hamadeh’s self-exposing provocation, including harsh criticism of Hamadeh for engaging the artists in this way. Each monologue is in fact a reenactment of these conversations, read by the artists, thereby making their own positions even more ambiguous. Hamadeh, as the “object of analysis” in this work, interrogates her assumed “self” as the portrayer and the portrayed—the spectator and the spectacle. The accompanying text is from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

“Museum as Hub: In and Out of Context” is organized by Annie Fletcher, Van Abbemuseum; Eungie Joo, New Museum; Heejin Kim, Insa Art Space/Arko Art Center; Tobias Ostrander, Museo Tamayo; and William Wells, Townhouse Gallery.

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Visitors may participate in free, docent-led public tours of the Museum’s current exhibitions Wednesday–Friday at 12:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 and 3 p.m. For information on group tours, please visit newmuseum.org/learn or call 212.219.1222 x235.

New Museum First Saturdays For Families take place on the first Saturday of every month from 10–12 p.m. and are free to the public. Tickets are given on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please visit newmuseum.org/learn/school_Land_youth or call 212.219.1222 x235.

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Panorámica Presents: On Hospitality

Courtesy Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City

All of the videos presented in this series have been presented at the Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo as part of the video program “Panorámica.” This selection of works addresses the theme of hospitality. In diverse ways, these works question the politics of home in a globalized world. They speak to the power dynamics involved in the relations between host and guest, and the temporary nature of various forms of residence. At times these themes are referred to in a direct manner, with videos that discuss immigration, cultural displacement, and social inequalities. In other works, these topics are referred to more abstractly, idiosyncratically, through scenes that play with the symbols and environments of the house or home and highlight their ephemeral or transient nature in contemporary culture.

Deborah Castillo

Entrevistas (Interviews), 2008

Video, color, sound, 3:46 min

Courtesy the artist

In this video, Deborah Castillo interviews people from diverse backgrounds and generations in Spain, in order to gather their opinion regarding the term “*sudaca*” which, according to the dictionary of the Real Academia Española, is a pejorative and colloquial expression used in Spain to refer to a person from South America. Through simple questions, the artist assumes her position as a “foreigner” in a country other than her own, where different ideas, information and opinions exist—some more complex than others—regarding the same topic: preconceived notions about specific groups of people in foreign contexts.

Adrian Paci

Centro de Permanenza Temporanea (Center for Temporary Permanence), 2007

Video, color, sound, 5:25 min

Courtesy Peter Blum Gallery, New York, and Peter

Kilchmann Gallery, Zurich

Adrian Paci’s video takes its name from the centers in Italy where illegal immigrants are housed while awaiting deportation to their country of origin. These centers are meant to be places of transit, but in many cases, the deportation process is far from swift and the detainees remain at these shelters for a long time. In this work, Paci specifically broaches the issue of migration and displacement, while additionally addressing the concept of belonging. The airport is presented as a temporary home, similar to Italy’s immigrant centers, and thus becomes a detention area. A place of transit is transformed into a shelter, revealing how different realities coexist, superimposed in a single space.

Hiraki Sawa

Dwelling, 2002

Video, black and white, sound, 8:09 min

Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York

Dwelling plays with the idea of the home as a human being’s primary universe by transforming its quintessential spaces into actual differentiated destinations of a contained world. Like dolls in a fairytale that wake up at midnight to play while the children are asleep, Hiraki Sawa’s planes travel while the tenants are away from home. The flight path through the apartment by these curious residents makes the viewer aware of the site and distances between specific areas in terms of the spaces we inhabit, perhaps rediscovering the essence of home. The work additionally contemplates our present-day relationship with airplanes. For frequent travelers this means of transportation; this non-place has become as much of a part of daily life as the space they identify as home.

Pablo Lobato

Outono, (Autumn), 2007

35 mm film, digitized, color, sound 21:15 min

Courtesy the artist

Outono is a short film focusing on a personal, intimate space, filtered through the contemplative gaze of a guest without a host, a wandering, solitary, mysterious figure who witnesses events taking place over the course of slightly more than twenty-four hours. The main character is an older man, a drifter, who enters an empty house and finds a hiding place from where he can remain unnoticed and which allows him to witness the day-to-day life of a weary man who acts by inertia. Tension and social anxiety are maintained due to the fact that one assumes these two protagonists are likely to meet. Though it seems unlikely that a stranger could cohabitate in this domestic space while remaining unnoticed, the narrative suggests that spaces contain infinite dimensions—this is indeed the case of the laconic “nomad” who, as he wanders through the house, seems more motionless than the “sedentary man.” Inevitably, the film leads us to question what happens in our homes when we are not there, or when we are absorbed within an alternate mental space.

Alex Hernández

Inventario (Inventory), 2007

Mini-DV film, digitized, color, sound, 12:30 min

Courtesy Fundación Ludwig, Cuba

Inventario shows homemade videos of a family that is separated; part of the family is in Cuba, the other in the US. Correspondence, in the form of recorded video, is displayed in this work; the Miami video, presented without edition or any special effects, is placed side by side with the one filmed by the artist himself in Havana. The second recording was produced as a response to the first video. The dialogue between images, simulating mirrored reflections, presents the interior spaces of two houses in different geographic places as forming one “single” mental or transnational space. This video also functions as documentation of alternate family interests, tastes, affections, and economic possibilities.

Damián Ortega

Reticencia al trabajo (segunda parte) (Reluctant to work (part two)), 2006

Video, color, sound, 5:15 min

Courtesy the artist and kurimanzutto, Mexico City

In the first part of *Reticencia al trabajo*, a bed, a chair, and a table, placed in an otherwise unremarkable setting, would unexpectedly and spontaneously begin to shake. In the project’s companion video (part two), and with similar lack of apparent motive, we see the artist take these same everyday items of furniture from inside his home, to the outskirts of Berlin, where he hastily dumps them in a river, a gesture perhaps recalling the ritual actions of Lawrence Weiner’s *Beached* (1970). Symbols of home, such as the ones displaced by the artist in this video, acquire the characteristics of a mobile space of habitation, one that can be occupied anywhere or disposed of easily.

Pablo Pijnappel

1921–1977, 1979–, 2002

Super 8 film, digitized, color, sound 8:34 min

Courtesy the artist

This video begins when Pablo Pijnappel’s grandfather, who fled the Netherlands during the Nazi occupation and went in search of his biological mother, travels to London, then to Paris, and finally encounters her in Rio de Janeiro. By means of this genealogical investigation, the artist reduces his selection of images to key elements that mark the course that led to his own birth in Paris. Depicting characters that have continuously emigrated within his family, Pijnappel addresses the complexity behind the concept of identity, which has traditionally been tied to places and their histories. Pijnappel’s video posits that identity, more than residing in a place, is created by the interrelation of conditions that affect and concern us.

Propositions

Seminar series, September 2009–June 2010

Commissioned by the New Museum

Propositions is a public forum that explores ideas in development. Inspired by the scientific method of hypothesis, research, and synthesis, each two-day seminar explores a topic of current investigation in an invited speaker’s own artistic or intellectual practice. Over the course of a seminar session, these developing ideas are presented to the public, responded to, “researched,” and discussed to propel the ideas forward in unique ways.

One Friday evening per month, an invited artist or cultural thinker will present on an idea in process—the hypothesis—as the seminar topic. This initial presentation introduces the seminar leader’s current thinking on a concept or idea as well as unresolved questions that remain. The next day, an “expert” lecture, screening, performance, or activity presents new perspectives or specific knowledge. In the discussion that follows, hypothesis, research, and public dialogue converge in an informal working session in the Museum as Hub space.

Public Programs

Tarek Atoui: Empty Cans

During his Museum as Hub residency in New York, Tarek Atoui continued his Empty Cans project and conducted music and technology workshops with teenagers from the New Museum’s high school program, G:Class, in collaboration with New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. New Museum Theater

Saturday, August 8, 3 p.m.

\$6 MEMBERS, \$8 GENERAL PUBLIC,

FREE FOR STUDENTS UNDER 18

A Proposition by Kara Walker

Join Kara Walker for a two-day forum on an idea in progress by the artist. Space is limited.

New Museum Theater

Friday, September 25, 7 p.m.

Saturday, September 26, 12 p.m.

FREE WITH MUSEUM ADMISSION

Out of Context: Museum as Hub One-Day Symposium

Museum as Hub partners Annie Fletcher, Van Abbemuseum; Sofia Hernández Chong Cuy, Museo Tamayo; Eungie Joo, New Museum; Heejin Kim, Insa Art Space/Arko Art Center; Tobias Ostrander, Museo El Eco Experimental; William Wells, Townhouse Gallery, and others discuss models for curatorial and institutional practice.

Wednesday, October 21, 12–6 p.m.

FREE FOR MEMBERS, \$10 GENERAL PUBLIC

Please visit newmuseum.org for detailed directions and information. For information on exhibition-related programs at the New Museum, please visit newmuseum.org/events.