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A Dose of the Fantastic: Art in General's Performa 09 Projects

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Erratic Anthropologies

October 29, 2009 – January 9, 2010

Press Preview Thursday, October 29, 2009 2 pm

Opening reception Thursday, October 29, 2009 6-8 pm

Phase IV Open Houses, every Saturday from Nov 7-December 19, 2-6 pm

Art in General presents *Erratic Anthropologies* as part of the New York visual art performance biennial, Performa 09. Through three performative installations Shana Moulton, Rancourt/Yatsuk, and Guy Benfield mine the visual culture of flawed but influential community structures – the hippie commune and the American suburb. Using narrative strategies the artists act as quasi-anthropologists, investigating domestic objects and architectures to pick apart the promises identified with these cultures – wealth, power, happiness, and transcendence. With a dose of the fantastic, these artists highlight the psychological, economic, and environmental fallout from the failure of idealistic attempts at redefining western social dynamics.

Art in General's Executive Director, Anne Barlow states, "It was a wonderful opportunity to have been a part of Performa's inaugural year in 2005 and we are thrilled to participate for the third time, in Performa 09, with the three thought-provoking New Commission Projects that make up *Erratic Anthropologies*."

Shana Moulton's *The Undiscovered Antique* is a new episode in the continuing saga of her alter-ego, Cynthia, presented at Art in General as an immersive, multi-channel video installation and performance. Through Cynthia's searches for fulfillment via home décor, self-help rituals, and cosmetics, Moulton examines the relationship of bodily and spiritual anxieties to popular culture, technology, and gender. In this ninth installment of her *Whispering Pines* series, Moulton explores the visual and cultural legacies of the American Southwest as Cynthia takes on a quest to find the PBS television show *Antiques Roadshow*, hoping to confirm the potential material value of her domestic artifacts. Over the course of this journey, Cynthia undergoes physical and spiritual transformations that question the authenticity of both her perception of the material world and of her own body.

Images Left: Shana Moulton, *The Undiscovered Antique*, 2009, video still. Courtesy of the artist
Right: Rancourt/Yatsuk, Production Still from *Phase IV*. Courtesy of the artists and Kate Werble Gallery, New York.

In *Phase IV* artists Rancourt/Yatsuk enact the story of fictitious star realtor Don Donavucci in his desperate attempts to construct a model home for his idyllic suburban community during the height of the housing market crash. Donavucci's fantastic landscape cum architectural vision (a mixture of elegant suburban excess and raw construction materials) will house a series of "OPEN HOUSE" days, where Don will be on-site to show his creation and attempt to make the sale. Drawing inspiration from failed suburban housing developments of the past century, particularly those in southwest Florida, *Phase IV* will investigate issues of sustainability, urbanization, and limitations of natural resources. *Phase IV* seeks out the dramatic extremes of the housing crash to reveal the grim human ecology that has spread throughout United States and around the world.

Guy Benfield's *Night Store* is an eight-week long performative installation in Art in General's Storefront Project Space. Drawing on tropes of modernism, faux ceramics, sculpture, painting, collage, and references to alternative collectives, Benfield transforms the architecture of space from tidy white-box gallery to pottery showroom, to artist studio, and eventually overcrowded storage space. Through various situational episodes in this non-stop evolution, Benfield explores the relation between current artistic practice and supposedly defunct strains in performance including ritual, transcendency, and live-action painting. Imagining the "trauma of pottery" as an expressionist dialogue, Benfield considers the space of the storefront as a kiln in which failure and unpredictable success commingle while pretense is burned away.

● PERFORMA 09

Performa 09 (November 1-22, 2009) is the third edition of the internationally acclaimed biennial of new visual art performance presented by Performa, a non-profit multidisciplinary arts organization dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth century art and to encouraging new directions in performance for the twenty-first century. www.performa-arts.org

Public Events

Wednesday, November 11th and 18th

7 pm

Performance offerings from the projects in *Erratic Anthropologies*. Spend time with characters from *The Undiscovered Antique*, *Phase IV*, and *Night Store*

Saturdays from November 7th to December 19th

2-6 pm

Phase IV Open House with Don Donavucci

Support

General support of Art in General is provided by General Tools LLC; Abraham and Lillian Rosenberg Foundation; Starry Night Fund of Tides Foundation; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; National Endowment for the Arts; Carnegie Corporation of New York; public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; Jerome Foundation; Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro; Miller-Sweezy Charitable Trust; Lily Auchincloss Foundation; Bloomberg; Cowles Charitable Trust; Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation;

Foundation for Contemporary Arts; The Liman Foundation; NYU Community Fund; and by individuals.

The New Commissions Program is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts; Jerome Foundation; and the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation. Additional support for *Night Store* has been provided by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Art in General's A/V Elevator Program is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.



About Art in General

Founded in 1981 in Lower Manhattan, Art in General is a nonprofit organization that assists artists with the production and presentation of new work. It changes in response to the needs of artists and engages the public with their work. Since it was established, the organization has emerged as one of New York City's leading nonprofits devoted to supporting and stimulating the creation of contemporary art, providing an environment in which artists may exhibit unconventional work and exchange ideas with their peers.

Location: 79 Walker Street, NYC, at the southeast corner of Cortland Alley. One block south of Canal Street, between Lafayette and Broadway.

Subway directions: take the 6, A-C-E, N-Q-R-W, or J-M-Z to Canal Street.

Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday 12-6 pm.

Admission: Always free.

Art in General's 6th Floor Gallery and restrooms are wheelchair accessible, and we can provide assistance to visitors with disabilities as requested.