

Press Release / MeetFactory Gallery / Enacting Stillness: an exhibition in nine parts

Curator: Sara Reisman

Opening: June 11, 7:30 pm

Exhibition duration: June 11 – August 28

Artists: Rehan Ansari, Nicolas Dumit Estevez, Brendan Fernandes, Yoko Inoue, Claudia Joskowicz, Kirsten Justesen, Clifford Owens, Jan Pfeiffer, Emily Roysdon a Roman Štětina

Enacting Stillness is an exhibition that brings together artists engaged with stillness and acts of slowing down in the contexts of performance art, moving image, and theater. Artists featured in the exhibition employ gestures and time-based practices that challenge and upend our expectations for the continuity of performative compositions and lines of movement and thought. Together, the artworks in exhibition question what unexpected ruptures like meditation, resistance, contemplation, rest, and the reversing of movement and time might mean to both the artist and the viewer.

Located along a spectrum between temporal ruptures and perceptions of one's own presence, the artists featured in *Enacting Stillness* reconsider their places in space and time. Nicolás Dumit Estévez's project *For Art's Sake* (2005-2007) was staged as a series of urban pilgrimages throughout the boroughs of New York City that sought to reverse the traditional relationship between art and religion while drawing attention to the durational qualities of performance art. More precisely mapping out the dynamics of performative thought and action, Emily Roysdon's *Ecstatic Resistance* (2009-2010) diagrams and analyzes the interplay between intentionality and improvisation and the boundary between what can be spoken and what is unspeakable in the process of staging a performance.

Repurposing the visual language of ballet and meditation, Brendan Fernandes, Kirsten Justesen, and Roman Stetina slow movement down, their own and that of other performers, to what reads as a near halt to locate sites of activation in performative poses and gestures. Fernando's *The Working Move* (2012) connects performing art with visual art by staging scenes of dancers interacting with plinths that typically support sculptural objects in a gallery setting, questioning the value of human physical labor in the production of art. Justesen's *Pedestal Piece* (2000-2002) is a test of will between a woman and the environment. *Pedestal Piece* demonstrates the passage of time in relation to global warming, with her own body set against a backdrop of ice. Stetina's *Test Room* (2015) captures, on video, a lone performance by a camera operator whose tense choreography alludes to the steady camera rig's original purpose as a military tool for carrying weaponry.

Claudia Joskowicz's two channel video *Sympathy for the Devil* (2011) is a meditation on a recurring situation in post- War World II Latin America when the region offered asylum to both persecuted Jews and Nazi Germans, antagonistic communities in Europe, which coexisted in relative lull in Latin America.

Breaking through the fourth wall between audience and performers, Clifford Owens' enactment of performance scores provided by other artists (as part of his project *Anthology*, 2011) calls out the tensions and power relations that are negotiated between choreographer, performer, participant, and audience. Featured in *Enacting Stillness* is a video of Owens following the instructions of artist Maren Hassinger's performance score. Audience members move and position Owens who remains in what Hassinger has called "a reprieve of action".

Rehan Ansari and Yoko Inoue's projects - Ansari's a full-scale play and Inoue's a durational, public performance - are both shaped by the after-effects of September 11th. Inoue's

Transmigration of the SOLD (2001-2016) explores the connections between immigration, global politics, and the conditions of labor. On a small scale, over an extended period, Inoue has worked to reverse the cycles of production of artisan crafts that are typically found for sale in the most makeshift of marketplaces. Ansari's play *Unburdened* tells the story of a Canadian journalist who covers the war in Karachi, Pakistan, where he stays with his elderly aunt and uncle who live with a secret from that dates back to the Partition of India. Ansari's play has been translated into Czech and will be performed during the first week of the exhibition. The set for *Unburdened* has been designed by artist Jan Pfeiffer.

Together, the artists work with an economy of means to test the limits of performance - for the performer, the viewer, and the participant - provoking us to question how our own positions, whether still or in motion, connect to larger social and political concerns.

Open daily 1 – 8 pm and according to the evening program. Voluntary admission fee.

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MeetFactory – prostor pro živé umění

Our mission is to foster a dialogue between individual genres and make the current happenings on the art scene accessible to the widest public.

We aim to create a space where art is alive and artists are present, enhancing a direct exchange between international artists and visitors.

MeetFactory is supported in 2016 by a grant from the City of Prague amounting to 10.000.000 CZK.