

Asia Contemporary Art Week



Signature Forum

**FIELD MEETING** Take 6  
*Thinking Collections*

**January 25 & 26, 2019**

In collaboration with Alserkal Avenue, Dubai, UAE

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## FIELD MEETING Take 6 : *Thinking Collections* Curated by Leeza Ahmady



### Curatorial Narrative

Asia Contemporary Art Week (ACAW), curatorial & educational platform, is pleased to collaborate with Alserkal Avenue on the 6th iteration of its annual art forum FIELD MEETING to stage 35+ performances, lecture-performances, talks, and a string of pop-ups by some of today's outstanding artists, curators, and creative minds.

Each year, FIELD MEETING sets out to re-evaluate one quintessential contemporary art world term, as a way for artists and arts professionals to think more consciously about their work and community. This year, Take 6 de-categorizes the word "collections" away from the ever-burgeoning global art market to claim the artist as the first collector.

Holding a multitude of connotations, the word "collections" in the art world is often surrounded by conversations of relevance, inclusion, cultural narrative, and monetary value. Within the communal mind of all societies, the building of a collection seems spartanly reserved for the wealthy and the privileged. However, for centuries, artists and other creative individuals have gathered everything—be they specific aspects of reality, fiction, or other diverse subject matter to create bodies or containers for the accumulation of their own ideas, insights, and mechanisms that, at some point in time, become identified as art objects in the world.

Bassem Saad & Edwin Nasr, *This ritual I wish you could see* (Render and file), 2018. HD video still.

During our childhood, we all collected something, if not many things, as a natural part of growing up and understanding the world: Seashells gathered on a trip to the beach, stamps from around the world kept in a shoebox under one's bed, or Lego sets pouring out of closets. We memorized lyrics of every song by the infamous Iranian pop singer Gogoosh or the national anthems of countries in the world. These forms of collections become built into the membranes of our cells as extensions of who we are, where we have been and where we wish to go—a grouping of objects, events, feelings and thoughts mapping out our existence in different instances of time and space. Today, a period distinguished by the Information Age, the bounds of collections are vigorously challenged everywhere—social media and smart technology gather and store our preferences in ways that are at once comforting, and deeply disturbing. No longer are our photographs stored in physical albums, nor our favorite CDs stacked on our living room shelves. Instead, the boundless abyss of a digital cloud instantly gobbles up all logs of our activities. Interactions have become symbolic, in so far as we often cannot link any physical trace of many of our daily experiences. Meanwhile, internet companies record, archive, and manipulate our search history to customize the advertisements we receive; perpetuating mass consumption by keeping humanity numb and ever entangled by the roots of our own collection of personal, psychological, social, and emotional insecurities.

In these circumstances, a re-evaluation of the term “collections” is in order. What exactly do we mean by “collections” and “collecting”? Who are the dominant powers at play, and what are the values these collections perpetuate? Most urgently, the forum questions the ideas, apparatuses, and visions of countless collections and if they correlate with our true purpose as human beings. How are our minds being colonized by the “information age” to serve the insatiable desires of a capitalist market system? Indeed, our attachment to consumption and the accumulation of objects are increasingly endangering the planet, which contains a countless array of animal and plant species that together, with other great elements in the universe, make up a truly boundless collection of energy, otherwise known as the cosmos.

These questions take on a much more specified valence when considering Asia as a vast continent of regions and countries that have been fragmented through the categorization and recategorizations of academicians in fixed paradigms. Premiering for the first time in Dubai at the crossroads of a geographical location, which until recent decades was not generally, referred to as Asia, FIELD MEETING Take 6 addresses the lack of ongoing, robust, and artistic connectivity between Western and Eastern regions of Asia. The forum links MENASA (Middle East, North Africa & South Asia) institutions directly with a group of diverse practitioners, whose efforts complicate categorical notions about the continent.

### Day 1, Morning Notes Inside Out: The Artist as Collector

Reflection is an act often used as a potent device through which artists launch inquiries about self, society, and matters at large. Observations of their internal world in relationship to exterior realities allow them to gather an inextricable accumulation of meaning. These savored acts of assembling, ordering and reorienting of significant experiences, ideas, feelings, intuition, memory, education, training, research, and history are churned into abstract, physical, and conceptual energies over time—which are then transmuted into understandings that make up the essence of any great art work. Thus, in the first session of FIELD MEETING Take 6, the unprecedented notion of seeing the artists as the first collector is introduced through an exploration of artists' processes and artistic activities.

**Ranbir Kaleka** (New Delhi) discusses his childhood spent in an Indian village *haveli*, or mansion, considering how these years contributed to the development of his nuanced inner



Haiyang Wang, *The Birth of the Word, to the Demise of the Bird*, 2014-2018. Pastel on sandpaper.

life and sense of proportion. Through a container of occurrences, which he refers to as “visual events,” his work activates stories, images, and ideas from the drawers of his own mind, and that of the collective conscience, to offer repertoires of meaning and reading for viewers. On another spectrum of reflection, **Heman Chong** (Singapore) unpacks *Foreign Affairs*, an ongoing project representative of his quintessential practice documenting the unseen—photographs of embassy backdoors taken on his travels around cities of the world. As symbolizing barriers between the people and the government, Chong exposes these hermetically sealed entryways from the outside in to apprehend speculation often used by government officials in making policy. By extension, Chong then speculates on these same agents' place for carrying out covert actions. Expanding the Morning's accent on quiet and personal meditations, **Nikhil Chopra's** (Goa) 1-hour performance-action invites the audience to contemplate transformation through a large-scale landscape drawing, which he renders on-site with lipstick.

### Day 1, Afternoon Notes Pendulum Swings & Spheres of Influence

The principle of polarity, also known as the forces of yin and yang, is foregrounded in the Afternoon Notes with a compilation of visionary “projects for empowerment” that in fact operate as ruthless mechanisms for depletion, destruction, and antagonism.

Through a lecture-performance iteration of her former multi-chapter animation project: *Atomi Daamaki Wali Mohabbat (The Atomically Explosive Love)*, **Umbur Majeed** (New York & Lahore) chronicles nuclear power in Pakistan within the frameworks of aesthetics, nationalism, state propaganda, community, and self. On a similar note, **Bassem Saad & Edwin Nasr** (Beirut) juxtapose Western military-entertainment mindsets with the use of virtual reality and video games in the Middle East to examine how historical, geopolitical, and identitarian narratives are simulated. In his obsessive studies of a region marked by climate change and recent geopolitical expansions, **Alexis Destoop** (Sydney & Brussels) reconfigures the history of the Russian-Norwegian borderland to re-imagine this space as a poetical re-appropriation, portraying a zone where past and future are confounded.

**Khadim Ali's** (Sydney & Kabul) talk entitled *Demonology* sheds light on the forces of destruction through the entanglements of the *Dew* and the *Pari* (demons and angels) in the mythologies of Central Asia and elsewhere. Dissecting its lore, Ali views demonology as an enabler for the “othering” of and persecution of minority groups such as the Hazara in Afghanistan. Also drawing from his native country, **Moe Satt** (Yangon) codifies the oppressive socio-political conditions of warfare experiences in Myanmar through a set of facial and body gestures in his performance *F n' F* (face and finger).



**Heman Chong**, *Foreign Affairs #62*, UV print on unprimed canvas, 51 x 78.7 x 1.5 inches (130 x 200 x 5 cm), Signed and dated verso, Unique, 2018.

### Day 1, Evening Notes Modes of Being: Ideologies and Space as Malleable Entities

Reinterpreting the role of collections, the presenters in Day 1, Evening Notes act as the provocateurs of different modes of being by interacting with various social codes and ideologies to challenge their true meaning. What if our collections of knowledge such as psychoanalysis and transculturalism are to be given new realms of practice? It would require going back to the drawing board entirely, not only in our reading of social codes, but the meaning of what occupying a physical space signifies. What if the space in which you lived could literally enlighten you, raise the level of your consciousness, or, even better, allow you to live immortally?

**Sam Samiee's** (Tehran) talk delves into psychoanalysis, Manichaeism, and the Persian code of conduct, *Adab*, as interconnecting beliefs which can be used to reconstruct epistemic frames of mind. *Adab* has often been thought of as an immalleable set of rules or customs one must follow to achieve a good life. However, *Adab* is not so different from psychoanalysis and Manichaeism, as all three systems are working to achieve internal harmony through different means. Similarly, in her work *Hatayi*, **Burçak Bingöl** (Istanbul) recounts the trade of Chinese porcelain via the Silk Road, which influenced the evolution of the highly distinctive Ottoman Court style. Here, the fluidity of aesthetics across geographic borders as caused by transculturalism, recasting one's conception of spatiality to create a deeper meaning and history of artistic influence.

Also dealing with spatiality, **Chongbin Zheng** (San Francisco & Shanghai) presents a talk in which he applies an understanding of light as a function of garden building culture. Zheng challenges the idea that gardens were created as signifiers of wealth and status. He asserts that their true function was to enlighten their inhabitants in living a more consequential life in connection to nature. This reacquisition of space extends even further through the grand project of the artist / architect / scientist / revolutionary couple **Arakawa & Madeline Gins** as introduced by **ST Luk** (New York & Tokyo) through an excerpt film entitled *Children Who Won't Die*. The couple's legendary death-defying philosophy of transformative housing has challenged the bounds of space not simply as a source of enlightenment, but as an interaction with the physical body as a means for a longer life.

Rounding out Day 1, **Arahmaiani Feisal** (Yogyakarta & Tibet) urges us to adopt her “Manifesto of the Sceptic”, proclaiming artists as “alchemical vessels” for change as exemplified by her long-term collaboration with Tibetan monks (and local Chinese authorities), resulting in the planting of nearly one million trees across the country.

These Evening Notes on Day 1 lay bare for us how creative foresight can transcend rigid ideological dictums and hegemonic codes into malleable material for consciousness, nourishment, and longevity. The modes of being proposed in this section are not mere intellectual exercises, but encompass a sincere physical and energetic transformation of communities—past, present, and future. While modern societies are preoccupied with individual attainment, living a truly fulfilling life is in fact rooted in our connection with and nurturing of others and the planet as a whole—the largest, true collection.

### Day 2, Morning Notes Community As Institution and Institution as Community

While institutional critique has long been a topic for introspection at art events, communities lacking such infrastructures are largely absent from these discourses. Residencies and art programs are abundant in the West, franchising their reach throughout cosmopolitan cities and key regional hubs. Yet, regardless of whether in an impoverished or flourishing institutional landscape, most trained artists today do not make their livelihood strictly through their art. Many allow this reality to lose their sense of purpose while also feeling entitled merely because they are granted a degree.

On the other end of the spectrum, artists within communities where institutional growth is hindered—autocratic governments, dictatorships, poverty, war, displacement and deterioration of natural environments—don't have room to discuss what is lacking. They instead mold their own forms of quasi-institutional behavior to both barely survive and, at times, greatly thrive in creating models that respond to their own local needs, history and



**Arahmaiani Feisal**, *Breaking Words*, 2006. Performance Documentation.

artistic trajectory. Presenters in Day 2, not only tackle well established or newly launched institutional endeavors for disseminating knowledge, but also engage with alternative forms of art making and collection building outside of institutional aid.

*Afghanistan Untitled*, a performative reading by **Francesca Recchia** (Kabul), tackles the vulnerabilities and complexities of living in Kabul as a foreigner, entangled with the small but struggling vibrant Afghan art scene. In opposition to operating within meager circumstances prevalent in conflict zones, large established museums across thriving world economies provoke questions on how infrastructure can be improved. For instance, in her curatorial talk **Lara Day** (Hong Kong) discusses the eminent M+ museum's collection in terms of relevance and accessibility in the digital age and the institution's need for "openness" to bold ideas.



Next, following a tour of the ACAW pop-up exhibitions housed in Warehouse 46, the artists and presenters in this section discuss their work in a lively joint conversation. An online selection of 17th to 21st century Japanese prints organized by Ronin Gallery director **David Libertson** (New York) exemplifies a private gallery's sustainable strategy for expanding community through a successful merger of traditional gallery charm with an innovative digital collecting experience. The individual's relationship with the institution as community continues as the common denominator in the work of the artists, such as in *Peace Coat* by **Zolaykha Sherzad** (Kabul & New York). Sherzad creates art and clothing not only in an effort to preserve traditional Afghan motifs and textile making techniques, but to also reinterpret modern design. She established, directs, and has maintained Zarif Design Center for over a decade, made up of a group of women and men working together to create within a safe environment, despite the unpredictable outer world of Kabul, Afghanistan. In her pop-up, **Amina Ahmed** (New York & Tehran) incorporates her mother Zulayka Mirashah's embroidery practice, which was nurtured by a sewing circle she founded during her girlhood. Placing her own drawings and newly conceived books adjacent to her mother's work, Ahmed honors companionship and shared experience as an essential method for creative process.

**Umber Majeed**, *Atomi Damaaki Wali Mohabbat (The Atomically Explosive Love)*, 2017-ongoing. Performance-lecture. Courtesy of Pirzada A. Waheed Archive (Rawalpindi, Pakistan), the CDA - Capital Development Authority (Islamabad, Pakistan), and Ashkal Alwan (Beirut, Lebanon).

The institution as a mighty entity, filled with resources established to meet the needs of all, is a phantom to be dismissed, much like the fantasy of meeting one's knight in shining armour. As a creative practitioner in much of the world, one is one's own institution—especially in the case of artists and curators who are often playing multiple roles from art and exhibition production to fundraising, marketing, discourse, and writing, to, at times, even acting as agents for works entering collections. The pop-up Limited *Liability Pavilion 4.0* exemplifies this type of community-making in Kazakhstan as presented by art managers **Vladislav Sludskiy & Olga Vesselova** (Almaty) in an installation of works from the private collections of artists formed through donations from their artists friends, colleagues, and art and cultural partners throughout the years.

Equally as ingrained in community as composites of one's past and present experiences whether personal, inherited, or institutional, **Nadira Husain** (Berlin), in her multimedia paintings, tapestries and sculptural objects, employs a variety of pictorial symbols and compositions from her various backgrounds to reflect on cultural phenomena. In his pop-up, Iranian artist **Ali Shayesteh** (Hamadan) treats societal dictums as critically as he does his attachment to personal memorabilia, such as photographs and writings. However, overtime some of his discarded compilations became assimilated into paintings & embroidered drawings, conveying nuanced sentiments often lacking within the linguistic folklore of culture.

Ending Day 2, Morning Notes, **Moe Satt** (Yangon) stages his second performance in the forum *Other Side of the Revolution / Fist on Me* reiterating the traumas of war and conflict by questioning the role each of us play as bystanders to the atrocities of the world. The institution of conflict implicates that such struggles affect everyone directly or indirectly.

### Day 2, Afternoon Notes A Loose Canon: Who is Collecting and Why?

Extending beyond the climate-controlled containers of highly secured museums, galleries, libraries or private homes, a collection's purpose often delves into the depths of human nature itself, asking: "What are we collecting?", "Why are we collecting it?" and "Who is collecting?" In a collaborative curatorial talk, **Natasha Degen & Sandra Skurvida** (New York) consider collections through educational frameworks within the MENASA region and beyond. They scrutinize behaviors of various art departments, foreign university outposts, artists' organizations, and museums to ponder the balance between the location of a culture and its communication outside its immediate field of reference.

**Pi Li**'s curatorial talk takes M+ museum's acquisition of Chinese artist Huang Yong Ping's monumental sculpture *Reptile* as a case-study to ask "What does it mean to build a museum collection in the 21st century and, more importantly, is it necessary for us to establish a canonical discourse for art in Asia?" Thus, while Degen and Skurvida focus on specificities of context and location, Pi Li is preoccupied with collection building in response to the predications of a particular era in time.

In her lecture-performance, artist **Wong Kit Yi**, aka **Ali Wong** (Hong Kong & New York), spins tales about DNA as a quintessential collection making up the very essence of every human being. In addition, she discusses projects for which she boldly courted collectors to purchase her would-be produced works as part of the making and conceptualization process of the projects. Leaping steps further, a year later, she offered collectors a 99-year lease for another series *Magic Wands, Batons and DNA Spiders*, as a critical nod to the historical precedent, the leasing of Hong Kong by the British from China.

Hegemonic canons is explored deeper yet in artist **River Lin's** (Paris & Taipei) performance *20 Minutes for the 20th Century, but Asian*, a parody of a Tino Sehgal's original work outlining iconic choreographies from the 20th century. However, while Sehgal's piece highlighted such prominent Western choreographers as Merce Cunningham and Pina Bausch, Lin reconsiders the history of dance through an Asian context containing its own form of distinct cultural memory.

## Day 2, Evening Notes Breaking Bad & Good: Subaltern Narratives

As curators and arts professionals, we are programmed to take as our duty the upkeep of institutional memory. We are tasked to consider how we can conserve and create access to everything that artists make, as well as to what degree an artist's work fits into the art historical canon. Yet, more and more artists working in Asia do not concern themselves with the conservation of their work, nor their place within a canonical range, Western or otherwise. Instead, many are reimagining the world through a process-oriented approach, treating everything as material. Thus, in the closing section of FIELD MEETING Take 6, subaltern research and visions for inclusivity address the gaps and erasures in modern society through formation of new aesthetic strategies.



Beginning with a walkthrough of FIELD MEETING pop-ups at Warehouse 47, the first hour of the Evening Notes is dedicated to a moderated conversation among the artists featured so that they may elaborate on the contexts of their pop-ups and practice in general.

On view, artist **Rana Dehghan's** (Tehran) site-specific multimedia installation, urges us to confront and acknowledge the deplorable ways in which animals suffer and are killed for consumption daily as part of an anthology of celebratory holiday rituals worldwide. **Hasanul Isyraf Idris'** (Penang) unique and otherworldly style of illustration is drawn from the visual vocabulary of his native Pangkor Island in Malaysia, compiled through oral stories amplified by the spectacular imagery of his surrounding landscape, animals and plants. Similarly, **Haiyang Wang** (Beijing) is known for his distinctive animations created through semiotic connections between actions that produce visual wordplay, visible in his drawings series and videos on view: *The Birth of the Word, to the Demise of the Bird*.

Also staging alternative worlds of fantasy and intrigue, artist, cultural critic and activist **Bingyi** (Beijing) premieres a video-installation-edition of her newly launched project *Ruins*, an epic trilogy of films set in the inner-city *hutongs*, or historic alleyways of Beijing. After collecting

**Bingyi**, *Ruins*, 2018. Video still.



*Hutong Love Letters*, or personal stories written by people who lived in these areas, **Bingyi** memorializes a neighborhood now demolished and its ways of life displaced.

In his pop-up installation *Protozoan as Self*, **Bahman Mohammadi** (Tehran) speculates on evolutionary processes through his studies of paleoanthropology, tracing earlier stages of "homo/l species" all the way back to the protozoans to argue that "there is very little distance between evolutionary progress of humans and other living organisms."

Wrapping-up the two-day marathon of back-to-back presentations, **Stephanie Bailey** (Hong Kong) is tasked to deliver reflection on what transpired at FIELD MEETING. Through her position as a writer and editor she performs the role of a reviewer in real time by translating the accumulation of ideas and sentiments shared through a coherent and provocative summation.

In an ultimate send-off, attendees gather at Warehouse 58 for a final performance to encapsulate the spirit of FIELD MEETING as an experimental space for reevaluating our work, its significance, and its impact in our lives; helping to extract what is working and what we need to let go of, both as individuals and as a community of creative professionals. **Arahmaiani Feisal** (Yogyakarta & Tibet), Indonesia's most prominent feminist artist, re-enacts *Breaking Words*, first performed in 2006 in Japan. Now in Dubai, punctuating the end of FIELD MEETING, Arahmaiani's performance calls upon age-old Sufi wisdom to propose that one must be the regular smasher of one's own beliefs, breaking free from the hypnotic semantics of our definitions of reality and concepts of truth.

**Wong Kit Yi & Ali Wong**, *Unloading Consciousness to a Lotus Root*, 2018. Still shot of single channel HD video, edition 5.

## Friday January 25

Time 9.30AM - 6.30PM

Presented at Concrete & Warehouses 46, 47 & 58

9.30AM Check-in  
10.00AM Doors open

### Morning Notes

10.00AM **Vilma Jurkute:** welcome remarks (Dubai)  
10.10AM **Leeza Ahmady:** opening thoughts (New York)  
10.25AM **Ranbir Kaleka:** talk (Delhi)  
10.40AM **Heman Chong:** talk (Singapore)  
11.10AM **Nikhil Chopra:** performance (Goa)  
12.00PM Discussion  
12.40PM Lunch

### Afternoon Notes

1.30PM **Umer Majeed:** lecture performance (New York & Lahore)  
1.45PM **Alexis Destoop:** lecture performance (Sydney & Brussels)  
2.05PM **Bassem Saad & Edwin Nasr:** lecture performance (Beirut)  
2.25PM **Khadim Ali:** talk (Sydney & Kabul)  
2.40PM **Moe Satt:** performance (Yangon)  
2.50PM Discussion  
3.30PM Break

### Evening Notes

3.45PM **Sam Samiee:** talk (Tehran)  
4.05PM **Burçak Bingöl:** talk (Istanbul)  
4.20PM **Chongbin Zheng:** talk (Shanghai & San Francisco)  
4.35PM **ST Luk on Arakawa & Madeline Gins:** screening (New York & Tokyo)  
4.55PM **Arahmaiani Feisal:** performative reading (Yogyakarta & Tibet)  
5.05PM Discussion  
5.45PM **Pop-ups walkthrough:** warehouses 46 & 47  
6.30PM **End of Day 1**

## Saturday January 26

Time 9.30AM - 6PM

Presented at Concrete & Warehouses 46, 47 & 58

9.30AM Check-in  
10.00AM Doors open

### Morning Notes

10.00AM **Leeza Ahmady:** opening notes (New York)  
10.10AM **Francesca Recchia:** reading (Kabul)  
10.25AM **Lara Day:** curatorial note (Hong Kong)  
10.40AM **Pop-Up Notes I:** walkthrough with artists | Warehouse 46  
Amina Ahmed (Tehran & New York), Maryam Ghoreishi (Tehran & Chicago), Nadira Husain (Berlin), Enrico Polato (Shanghai), Ali Shayesteh (Hamadan), Zolaykha Sherzad (Kabul), Vladislav Sludskiy & Olga Veselova (Almaty)  
11.10AM **Moe Satt:** performance (Yangon)  
11.30AM Discussion  
12.30PM Lunch

### Afternoon Notes

1.15PM **Sandra Skurvida & Natasha Degen:** curatorial note (New York)  
1.30PM **Pi Li:** curatorial note (Hong Kong)  
1.45PM **Wong Kit Yi & Ali Wong:** lecture performance (Hong Kong & New York)  
2.05PM **River Lin:** performance (Paris & Taipei)  
2.45PM Discussion  
3.20PM Break

### Evening Notes

3.30PM **Pop-Up Notes II:** walkthrough with artists | Warehouse 47  
Rana Dehghan (Tehran), Hasanul Isyraf Idris (Kuala Lumpur), Haiyang Wang (Beijing), Bingyi (Beijing), Bahman Mohammadi (Tehran)  
4.00PM Discussion  
5.00PM **Stephanie Bailey:** final reflections (Hong Kong)  
5.20PM **Leeza Ahmady:** last remarks  
5.30PM **Arahmaiani Feisal:** closing performance (Yogyakarta & Tibet)  
6.00PM **End of Day 2**

**Amina Ahmed** New York & Tehran

**Un-Furling | Pop-up Installation**

Before Ahmed was born, her mother, Zulayka Mirashah, formed a sewing collective—a place for women to gather, share their stories, and interact. These meetings took the form of essential practice, in rhythmically nurturing companionship, shared experience, and method. This space allowed for the unfolding and folding of vulnerability through physical and spiritual adjacency. For the pop-up, Ahmed honors the rhythm of repetition and the collective practice, placing her echoed inscribed line work and her mother’s meticulous thread-as-line embroideries alongside each other, reflecting on and embracing communal authorship.

**BIO** Amina Ahmed, born in East Africa and of Kutchi-Indian Turkiq heritage, grew up in England and has lived in Iran and the USA. She specialized in Islamic and Traditional Arts at The Royal College of Art. The practice of geometry grounds her drawings, and praxis is the primordial artery through which she strives to practically return — physically, symbolically, and spiritually. Selected exhibitions include: Nottingham Contemporary and the Show Room, London, Queens Museum, Alwan for the Arts, NYC, Clark House Initiative, Lakeeran Gallery, The Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai, Twelve Gates Gallery, and The Fiber Philadelphia’s International Biennial.



Curated By Priyanshi Saxena, Amina Ahmed’s FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Twelve Gates Arts (Philadelphia) & Clark House Initiative (Mumbai). Special thanks to Siddhant Shah (Mumbai) for his collaboration.

**Khadim Ali** Sydney & Kabul



**Demonology | Talk**

The artist introduces his concept of demonology as a collection of policies and manipulations of “othering” through various folkloric, religious, and epic tales in Central and South Asia across many centuries. In Afghanistan, as in many countries, demonizing particular groups of minorities is used as a way of legitimizing their persecution. For instance, the Hazara, one of the minorities most discriminated against in Afghanistan, were labeled as ‘rat-eaters’

and killing them would earn one a place in heaven. Ali incorporates two prominent characters in his works: the demon and the hero. Drawing from the epic Persian poem the *Shahnameh* and other folk tales, these invoked imageries symbolizing the constant renewal of the region’s programmatic collective memory of “otherness”.

**BIO** Born in 1978 of Afghan Hazara parentage, Khadim Ali grew up on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border. Rich in traditional and modern motifs of Eastern and Western art-historical references, Ali’s works tell stories about the loss of cultural heritage and human values, how meaning shifts as words, and images are perverted through ideological adoption. Selected exhibitions include the Venice Biennial (2009), Safavid revisited, APT5, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2006), British Museum, London, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2013) and Documenta13 (2012). Ali’s work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, QAGOMA, Brisbane, Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

**Stephanie Bailey**

Hong Kong

**The Writer as a Collector | Final Reflections**

It is at once again an honour and a challenge to be invited to deliver closing remarks to the 2019 edition of FIELD MEETING, given the task at hand is to review and relay the presentations and discussions that will unfold throughout the gathering. Throughout this symposium, I will perform, in real-time, the role of the reviewer, collecting the ideas that are expressed as discussions unfold and filter them into a text. My approach is to capture—as best I can—the different threads that emerge among participants, while responding in kind to my own position as a writer and editor; a role that represents its own form of ‘collecting’.

**BIO** Stephanie Bailey is the editor in chief of *Ocula Magazine*, contributing editor to *ART PAPERS* and *LEAP*, curator of *Conversations* at Art Basel in Hong Kong, and a *Naked Punch* editorial committee member. Between 2012 and 2017, Bailey worked as managing and senior editor of *Ibraaz*, an online forum for visual culture in and around North Africa and the Middle East, and now serves as managing editor for the online journal for M+ Museum in Hong Kong, *Podium*. She also writes for *Artforum International*, *Art Monthly*, *Di’van: A Journal of Accounts*, and *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*.

Stephanie Bailey’s FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Alserkal Avenue (Dubai).



**Burçak Bingöl** Istanbul

**Notes on Hatayi | Talk**

Throughout the 16th century, blue and white Chinese porcelain was traded via the Silk Road, and local artists in Asia Minor adopted the technique, allowing it to influence the evolution of the highly distinctive Ottoman Court style. *Hatayi* is Bingöl’s visual and conceptual reflections on how artistic ideas travelled along this famous trade route. Revolving around a 16th century ceramic panel by Shah Quli located in the Topkapi Palace, the project offers an interpretation of the panel in the form of a three-meter sculptural installation and suggests ways in which the ancient medium of ceramics served as an integrating link across various regions of Eurasia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Far East.



**BIO** Bingöl’s works explore notions of belonging, cultural heritage, memory and failure by blurring the boundaries between these seemingly distinct notions. Her solo exhibitions have been shown in New York, Ankara, and Istanbul, and individual works have been showcased in many international group exhibitions such as the 15th Istanbul Biennial. Bingöl’s works have also been included in many public and private collections internationally, such as in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Salsali Private Museum in Dubai, and the Baksı Museum in Bayburt, Turkey.

## Bingyi Beijing

### Ruins | Pop-up Installation

This installation incorporates an excerpt from the artist's epic trilogy of films set in the inner-city *hutongs*, or historic alleyways of Beijing. In 2015, Bingyi began collecting thousands of *Hutong Love Letters*—personal stories written by ordinary people on their life-changing experiences in the *hutongs*, shortly before they were demolished from the heart of China's contemporary capital. Using these testaments as inspiration, Bingyi spent three years re-writing and re-shooting the films which combine conceptual architecture, performance art, documentary, large-scale ink paintings, and installation. The full work is organized in three captivating chapters, incorporating tragic comedy, poetic romance, and murder mystery, in addition to the only footage of the 2017 demolition of Beijing's Daxing neighborhood.

**BIO** An artist, writer, curator, cultural critic, and social activist, Bingyi combines her interests in ecology, science, philosophy, history, and aesthetics into a multi-faceted artistic practice that encompasses land and environmental art, site-specific installation, musical, and literary composition, ink painting and performance art. She is known for her large-scale ink paintings as shown in her occupation of the Toronto City Hall in October 2013, when she created an 1,800 square meter ink painting over the course of twelve-hours entitled *Metamorphosis*.

Bingyi's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by INK Studio (Beijing).



## Heman Chong Singapore



### Foreign Affairs | Talk

Taking on multiple pragmatic uses, the back entrances of embassies have not only been used for deliveries and hassle-free entry, but for secret political conversations, allowing these doors to take on a symbolic meaning representing everything in politics that is unsaid, invisible, and sinister. In his keynote talk unpacking his ongoing project *Foreign Affairs*, Heman Chong examines these unassuming backdoors in a series of photographs that he has collected throughout his travels. Chong does not reveal the identity of which country each door belongs, but allows something to remain veiled and inaccessible. He has chosen to force his viewer to see the image repeated multiple times, as if they are a figure of surveillance.

**BIO** Heman Chong is an artist whose work is located at the intersection between image, performance, situations and writing, and often investigates the manner through which individuals form associations between objects in their environments. His recent solo exhibitions were held at the Swiss

Institute (Shanghai, 2018), Rossi & Rossi (2018), Calle Wright (2018), 72-13 (2017), Rockbund Art Museum (2016), and South London Gallery (2015) among others. He has participated in numerous international biennales, including the 1st Yinchuan Biennale (2016), and many more. He is currently working on a novel, *The Book of Drafts*, which will be published by Polyparenthesis in 2019.

Heman Chong's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Alserkal Avenue (Dubai).

Bingyi, *Ruins*, 2018. Video still. Heman Chong, *Foreign Affairs #35*, 2018. UV print on unprimed canvas.

## Nikhil Chopra Goa

### Rogue | Performance

Often using material from daily life, the artist uses lipstick, a cosmetic associated with femininity, sensuality and sexuality, to create a large-scale landscape drawing on a wall in his 1-hour performance action. Chopra's performances often critically examine stereotypes based on identity, nationality, gender and class, while walking a fine line between performance art, theater, and landscape drawing.



**BIO** Born in Calcutta and based in Goa, Nikhil Chopra's artistic practice incorporates multiple mediums, and often dwells on issues such as identity, the role of autobiography, the pose and self-portraiture, and the process of transformation. Chopra has participated in multiple major international exhibitions including dOCUMENTA 14 in Kassel Germany & Athens, Greece (2017); the 53rd Venice Biennale and the Manchester International Festival; The Kochi Muziris Biennale, Habana Biennale, and Sharjah Biennial in addition to numerous solo exhibitions including at the New Museum in New York (2009)

## Lara Day & Pi Li Hong Kong

### An Open Collection | Curatorial Notes

**Lara Day:** M+ has been building a pre-eminent collection of 20th and 21st century visual culture since 2012, long before the opening of its museum building (targeted for completion in 2019) in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District. Inspired by the idea of "openness" in the context of museum collections, digital culture, and Hong Kong as a historically open city, Day's talk explores what it means for a museum to be "open" in the digital age, and the role of the M+ collections in fostering a culture of collaboration, conversation, and transparency among local and global communities.

### BIO

Lara Day is the Senior Manager of Digital and Cross-Platform Content at M+. Bringing her digital publishing and editorial background to the museum, she established *M+ Stories* as the museum's virtual storytelling platform and opened access to the museum's collections through a public API. Prior to joining M+, Lara was a writer and editor, and managed digital projects at *The Wall Street Journal* in Hong Kong. Her immersive multimedia feature "Kowloon Walled City" won the Scripps Howard Award for Digital Innovation in 2014.



**Pi Li:** Li's presentation tackles M+'s response to the rapid conceptual and technological advancements in museums today through a case study, referencing the museum's 2017 acquisition of Chinese avant-garde artist Huang Yong Ping's monumental sculpture *Reptile*. Li outlines the importance of this work which revolutionized the collections protocol of M+. What does it mean to build a

Nikhil Chopra, *La Perle Noire: Le Marais*, 2016. Live performance documentation, duration 50 hours, Photography by Justin Meekel, Costume Loise Braganza. Lara Day, *A rendering of the M+ building, (aimed for completion in late 2019), designed by Herzog de Meuron*, credit: M+.

museum collection in the 21st century. More importantly, is it necessary for us to establish a canonical discourse for art in Asia, where such discourses have never existed, but rather, bracketed under a so-called “international” art history.

**BIO**

Pi Li is the Sigg Senior Curator of M+ in Hong Kong. Exhibitions Li has curated include *Right is Wrong: Four Decades of Chinese Art in M+ Sigg Collection* at Whitworth Gallery in Manchester and Bildmuseet in Umea (2015 & 2014), *Under Construction* at Tokyo Opera Museum, and *Moist: Asia-Pacific Media Art* at the Beijing Millennium Monument Art Museum (2002) among many others. He has also served as curator for the Shanghai Biennial and Allôrs la Chine at Centre Georges Pompidou. His publications include *From Action to Concept* (2015), and *Farewell to Moralism* (2018).



Lara Day & Pi Li's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by M+ (Hong Kong).

**Natasha Degen & Sandra Skurvida** New York

**Collection of Knowledge: Course of Study | Curatorial Note**

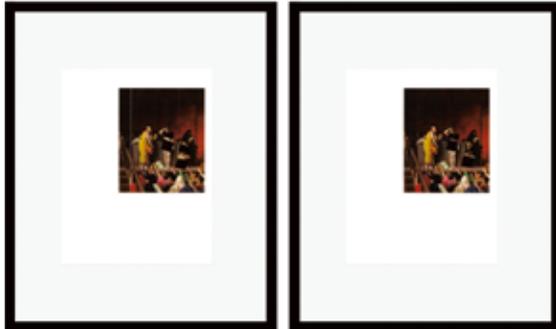
Degen and Skurvida elaborate on “collections” as a construction of discourses in various educational frameworks within the MENASA region and beyond. They scrutinize the activities and behaviors of various art departments, foreign university outposts, artists’ organizations, and museums. More specifically, they question these educational agent’s selective presentation and dissemination of knowledge via ventures abroad (such as the Field Study course led by New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology). Inviting critique, feedback, and dialogue, their presentation ponders the balance between the location of a culture and its communication outside its immediate field of reference. How can art ecosystems be represented without submitting to dominant mechanisms of knowledge production?

**BIOS**

Natasha Degen is both a professor and Chair of Art Market Studios at the

Fashion Institute of Technology, New York. She is a recognized writer and critic, having contributed to publications including *The New Yorker*, *The Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *Artforum* and *Frieze*, and serves as a member of the Editorial Board for the *Journal for Art Market Studies*. Among other prizes, she received an art criticism award from the Andy Warhol Foundation and a Luce Scholarship which sent her to Beijing for a year. In 2013, she edited *The Market* (MIT Press), an interdisciplinary anthology tracing the art market’s interaction with contemporary practice.

Sandra Skurvida, an Adjunct Associate Professor in Art History at the Fashion Institute of Technology, specializing in the theory, history, and curation of contemporary art. She was a Fulbright Scholar at CUNY Graduate Center and holds a PhD from Stony Brook University. Her writings have appeared in *Art Journal*, *Art Papers*, *Art Practical*, *Ibraaz*, *Interventions*, *Mousse*, *Dailé*, and *The International Journal of Islamic Art and Architecture*. Her book *John Cage Circus: Composition, Computation, Curation* is forthcoming. She has curated numerous art projects around the world since the 1990s.



**Rana Dehghan** Tehran

**Heads | Pop-up Installation**

A site-specific work weaving various mediums such as drawings, sculpture, and paintings to analyze the disturbing relationship between human consumption and the animal kingdom’s existence. The artist forefronts humanity’s continuous detrimental behavior towards animal-kind, calling attention to our complete oblivion of their suffering and destruction. The work is a strong protest against animal maltreatment and consumption as part of the world’s heritage and collection of integral celebratory rituals and holiday traditions.

**BIO**

Rana Dehghan was born in Tehran, Iran, and her works span from painting to video art, sculpture, and installations, with subject matters that are rooted in observations of the human body, gender, and environmental issues. Dehghan studied fine art and painting at the Bharati Vidyapeeth’s College of Fine Arts (Pune, India) and Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture, Azad University (Tehran). She has participated in a number of exhibitions, including a solo installation show in 2016, 2017, 2018, and several collaborative art projects.



Rana Dehghan’s FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Roya Khadjavi Projects (New York).

**Alexis Destoop**

Sydney & Brussels

**Phantom Sun | Lecture Performance**

Built from an extensive personal archive over multiple trips and expeditions, Destoop presents on his recent monumental video installation reconfiguring the history of the Russian-Norwegian borderland in the European High North. The work re-imagines this desolate geographic landscape through a poetic reappropriation, portraying a zone where past and future are confounded. Marked by the worldly conflicts of the 20th century, this region is directly undergoing the effects of climate change, while featuring prominently on the geopolitical chessboard of a recent Northward expansion. This ghostly stasis leaves everything in a state of expectation, while the references to unnamed conflicts suggest the possibility of a catastrophic past.



**BIO**

Alexis Destoop’s work forms an ongoing investigation into the workings of the image. His multilayered constructions in photography, installation and film examine the component elements of storytelling, the experience of time and the processes of identification and memory. Destoop has presented major installations at the 18th Sydney Biennale, Performance Space at CARRIAGEWORKS, ARGOS Centre for Media Art, Brussels, Galeria

Continua, Italy, SMAK Museum of Contemporary Art, Gent, Belgium, Musee des Beaux-Arts, Lille, France), and the Seattle Art Fair, USA.

Alexis Destoop’s FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Alserkal Avenue (Dubai).

Rana Dehghan, *Heads*, 2018-2019. Site-specific installation documentation. Alexis Destoop, *Kairos*, 2009-2012. Film still.

## Arahmaiani Feisal Yogyakarta & Tibet

### Breaking Words | Performative Reading and Closing Performance

A new iteration of the artist's renowned 2006 performance for FIELD MEETING, Feisal confronts personal and cultural differences through questioning the concept of so-called "truth." In a poetic call-and-response fashion, audience members offer key words in their lives, which are then written on plates and smashed on the ground by the artist. The work calls attention to a reckoning with mental traps that are set by virtue of all belief systems, societal conditionings, and even education. All of which effect tribulations and failures in cross-cultural interaction. For more information on Arahmaiani's second performance "Manifesto of the Sceptic", please refer to the curatorial narrative in this booklet.



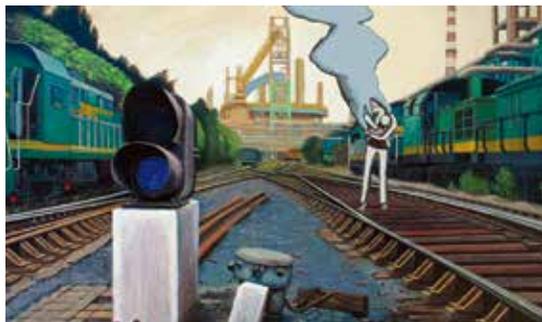
**BIO** One of Indonesia's most seminal and respected contemporary artists, Arahmaiani Feisal has been internationally recognized for her powerful and provocative commentaries on social, political, and cultural issues. Since 1980, Arahmaiani has been included in over one hundred exhibitions around the world including: the Venice Biennale; Biennale of the Moving Image, Geneva (2003); Gwangju Biennale (2002); Bienal de São Paulo (2002) among others. In New York City, she was included in the landmark 1996 exhibition *Traditions / Tensions* at Asia Society, as well as *Global Feminisms* at the Brooklyn Museum in 2007.

Arahmaiani Feisal's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Alserkal Avenue (Dubai).

## Yuan Gao Beijing

### Lunar Dial and Human Smoke | Pop-up Installation

A 15-minute animation realized over a period of six years consisting of a series of acrylic paintings and works on paper that were digitized onto the animation. Gao's work is rich with symbolism, conveying the uncertainty of consciousness, while illustrating the homogeneity and repetitiveness of images and concepts. By using a cyclical narrative, distinctive topics are interspersed throughout the 'journey', creating a visual rhythm of flowing water, moonlight, and other representations of knowledge. The film is accompanied by *Human Smoke* (2014-2015), a series of mixed-media drawings.



**BIO** Through animation and painting, Yuan illustrates the homogeneity and repetitiveness of images and concepts, and the temporality of the two. Yuan Gao's most recent solo exhibitions include *Gao Yuan: Eternal Return* at Capsule Shanghai. Her animations have been selected by major film festivals including Vancouver International Film Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam among others. Most recently, Yuan's animation piece *Lunar Dial* was nominated for a Tiger Awards for Short Films at the International Film Festival Rotterdam (2017).

Yuan Gao's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Capsule Shanghai (Shanghai).

## Nadira Husain Berlin

### Cosmic Trips | Pop-up Installation

As a French artist with Indian roots who lives and works in Berlin, Husain uses pictorial symbols and compositions of various traditions to reflect on how cultural phenomena and economic globalization shape our reactions to images. Her multi-medium installation of tapestries,



drawings, paintings, wearables, etc. cite patterns deriving from various origins, such as representations of ancient Indian gods and heroic epics, well-known cartoon characters, or objects of utility. Figures and picture codes populate the composition, sometimes in harmonious but also antagonistic relationships. Husain's work addresses gender and other power relations, updating traditional representations to create compelling contemporary imagery.

**BIO** Nadira Husain is a French-Indian teacher and artist in Berlin. Her practice reflects how economic and cultural globalization conditions our response to images, and often experiments with various pictorial media, developing a layering system in her artworks. Husain has exhibited at Villa du Parc Centre d'art Contemporain, France (2018), PSM, Berlin (2017); Armory Show, New York (2018); Artissima, Italy; Tempo Rubato, Tel Aviv (2016); and at ArtBasel, Miami (2013). She has been in group exhibitions in Europe and elsewhere, including at n.b.k, Berlin (2018); The Jewish Museum, New York (2015); and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2013).

Nadira Husain's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by PSM Gallery (Berlin).

## Hasanul Isyraf Idris Penang

### Higher Order of Love | Pop-up Installation

A compilation of intricate and vibrant drawings steeped in the illustration of distinct, otherworldly visual vocabulary that correlates with the artist's personal and regional aesthetics, Idris reflects on his native Pangkor Island in Malaysia through stories he heard as a child. The work unravels the geography, native species, ethnic diversity, and politics of the Island's culture. Numerous plots and narratives intertwine, deepening and amplifying themes of ancestry, heritage, racial riots, migration and alienation. The installation contemplates the phenomenon of global migration, paralleling Idris' family lineage with the evolution of native animals and plants as a collection of temporal complexities that predicate Malaysia's multiculturalism today.

**BIO** Hasanul Isyraf Idris is a Malaysian artist producing works in a variety of media, from paintings and meticulously crafted drawings to painted oven-baked clay sculptures. Gathering inspiration from local folklore and regional myths, Idris articulates his personal struggles as an artist by personifying them as strange characters that inhabit his invented universes. Beyond exhibiting locally and internationally, Idris has received a number of awards, including the Young Contemporary Arts Award at the National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur; the Incentive Award at the Open Show; and the Consolation Prize for the Young Talent Art Exhibition at the Penang Art Gallery, Penang.



Hasanul Isyraf Idris's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Richard Koh Fine Art (Kuala Lumpur).

Nadira Husain, *Beugen Strecken*, 2014. Installation documentation, Solo exhibition, Künstlerhaus Bremen, Bremen, Photo by Bjoern Behrens. Hasanul Isyraf Idris, *Disturbing the Enemy with Sheera*, 2017. Watercolor, ink and color pencil on paper.

## Ranbir Kaleka

New Delhi

### Miraculous Non-Events | Talk

Starting with the first five years of his life in a village *haveli* (mansion), where each family member was a unique storyteller, Kaleka's talk revolves around snippets of stories and images of his video, painting and sculptural works. "My brother and I were the only two children in the large house. Nothing major ever happened in the house, and time moved slowly, giving great significance to the tiniest 'non-event'. These types of phantasmagoric performances and the architecture of the *haveli* formed my inner life and sense of visual proportion. As I moved out from the village to the town, and then to the city, travelling to different regions of India, I actively collected orally-narrated stories from strangers and friends. From the recesses of my mind where they had settled, the accumulated stories emerge as invented 'events', creating a psychological map of my mind and of the people amongst whom I live."

**BIO** Raised in the city of Patiala, India, Ranbir Kaleka works in both Britain and India. In the three decades of his artistic activity, Kaleka has produced a remarkable body of paintings — vibrant with phantasmagoria and epic disquiet—along with a body of trans-media works that combine conceptualist sophistication with a calibrated opulence of image. Kaleka's work has been exhibited in variety of museums, biennials, foundations, and gallery contexts and across cities such as Venice, Berlin, Lisbon, Vienna, Tokyo, New York, Mexico City, and Sydney, among others.



## David Liberton

New York



### Pop-up Installation

A special online collection showcasing 17th-21st century Japanese prints presented by the New-York based Ronin Gallery, exclusively organized for FIELD MEETING. Showcasing a spirit of independence, the gallery's online digital platform allows collector's direct access to its highly-coveted inventory. Currently under its second-generation of management, Ronin Gallery has successfully merged traditional gallery charm with an innovative digital experience to make their collection accessible worldwide.

**BIO** David Taro Liberton is the President and owner of the Ronin Gallery in New York City. Liberton is a member of the Japanese Art Society of America, the John D Rockefeller III Circle at the Japan Society, the Council for Asian Art and Thought, and the Asia Circle Young Leaders Program at the Asia Society. Additionally, he is one of the youngest western members to be admitted to the Ukiyo-e Dealers Association of Japan.

Ranbir Kaleka, *House of Opaque Water*, 2012. 3 channel projection with sound on 3 panels. Hokusai, *Great Wave Off Kanagawa from the 36 Views of Fuji*, c. 1830. Woodblock print.

## River Lin Paris & Taipei

### 20 Minutes for the 20th Century, but Asian | Performance

Based on a research on the performing archive, the form and title of this performance parodies the artist Tino Sehgal's "20 Minutes for the 20th Century" (1999), a collage of 20 iconic choreographies from Merce Cunningham to Pina Bausch to Jérôme Bel among others. This performance negotiates how to reconsider 20th century history of dance within an Asian context. The dancer Wen-chung Lin's personal history and bodily memory serve to investigate the cultural progress of Chinese folk dance, ballet and the Graham technique amongst others. From the collective body and memory to the individual, the dancer performs and questions the historical transformation of inter-cultural embodiment. Concept and choreography: River Lin, Performer: Wen-chung Lin

**BIO** River Lin is an artist working across the fields of visual and performing arts. Body is the main medium he works with to explore art forms and investigate the relationship between the ritualistic and the spatial-temporal. Lin's work includes live installation, one-on-one performance and choreography, and has been presented at exhibitions and festivals, including Do Disturb Festival of the Palais de Tokyo and Camping of Centre National de la Danse in Paris, Live Art Project of M+ Museum in Hong Kong, Liveworks Festival in Sydney, 2016 Taipei Biennial and the Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai amongst others.

River Lin's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Alserkal Avenue (Dubai) and National Culture and Arts Foundation of Taiwan.



## ST Luk on Arakawa & Madeline Gins

New York & Tokyo

### Children Who Won't Die | Screening

ST Luk presents a film centering on the vivid colors, undulating floor, irregular lines, and spherical rooms of the Reversible Destiny Lofts designed by Arakawa (Japanese-American) and Madeline Gins (American) in Mitaka, Japan. The film revolves around the philosophy of the artist/scientist/revolutionary couple who believed that one's destiny could be reversed away from death through transformative housing. Directed by Nobu Yamaoka and scored by composer Keiichiro Shibuya, *Children Who Won't Die* proudly sings a celebration of life, highlighting the possibilities of a world no one could ever have imagined before.



**BIO** ST Luk is the Project Manager at Reversible Destiny—a foundation founded in 2010 to further advance the legacy of the couple Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins in arts, architecture, and writing. Their renowned seminal work was presented at the exhibition *Arakawa/Gins: Reversible Destiny* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1997. With a background in architecture, ST Luk worked closely with Madeline Gins to realize the couple's last built project during their lifetime entitled *Biotopological Scale-Juggling Escalator* shown in New York in 2013.

ST Luk's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by the Reversible Destiny Foundation (New York).

River Lin (concept and choreography) and Wen-chung Lin (performer), *20 Minutes for the 20th Century, but Asian*, 2016. Photo credit to You-wei Chen. Nobu Yamaoka, *Children Who Won't Die*, 2010. Film still.

**Umber Majeed** New York & Lahore

**Atomi Daamaki Wali Mohabbat (The Atomically Explosive Love) | Lecture Performance**

A multi-chapter animation that speaks to questions of nationalism, state propaganda and aesthetics, community, and self through speculative fiction. The narrative chronicles the history of nuclear power in Pakistan, the first 'Muslim nuclear state'. In developing this artwork, Majeed used state and familial archives to intersect specific historical moments, starting with the successful nuclear tests performed in the 1990s to the conception/destruction of a military-state monument, Chaghi Monument Hill. The reading through the female (herself), allows for a queering and alternative historicizing of South Asia in an age of global nationalist uprisings.



**BIO** Umber Majeed is a multidisciplinary visual artist whose writing, performances, and animation engage with familial archives to explore the specifics of the Pakistani state and its urban infrastructures through a feminist lens. Majeed has exhibited across venues in Pakistan, North America, and Europe. Her recent shows include *Promises to Keep at Apexart* in New York, *Witness- Karachi Biennale* (2017), *Volumes-Queens International 2018* at the Queens Museum, and *In the Name of Hypersurface of the Present at the Rubber Factory* in New York (2018). Her work is in several private collections, including the Lekha and Anupam Poddar Collection at Devi Art Foundation in Gurgaon, India.

Umber Majeed's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by The Digital Earth Fellowship & British Council and Hivos.

**Bahman Mohammadi** Tehran

**Protozoan-Self Portrait | Pop-up Installation**

A reflection on reality rooted in human paleoanthropology as an archive of evolutionary processes. Mohammadi studies the progression of human development by tracing the earlier stages of the "homo/l species" all the way back to the protozoans, or single-celled microbes. Through his self-portraits, he argues that man has moved further away from his central position in the world, and that there is little distance between the evolutionary progress of humans and other living organisms. The use of photographic paper intentionally renders his work as scientific evidence, whereby he speculates on the possibilities of his own mental and physical evolution as other kinds of species.



**BIO** Born in Hamadan, Iran, Bahman Mohammadi is an artist who lives and works in Tehran. Intrigued by matters related to "human beings," such as birth, nurture, social constructions, and evolution, Bahman's artworks encourage viewers to reconsider natural and constructed occurrences that are often overlooked. His work has been exhibited in more than 50 group shows, nationally and internationally, including at Ethan Cohen Gallery, New York and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Etemad, and Mah Art Gallery in Tehran. In 2009, he was awarded in the Seventh Iranian Painting Biennale and has been given multiple awards since.

Bahman Mohammadi's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Mah Art Gallery (Tehran).

Umber Majeed, *Atomi Damaaki Wali Mohabbat (The Atomically Explosive Love)*, 2017-ongoing. Performance-lecture. Courtesy of Pirzada A. Waheed Archive (Rawalpindi, Pakistan), the CDA - Capital Development Authority (Islamabad, Pakistan), and Ashkal Alwan (Beirut, Lebanon). Bahman Mohammadi, *Australopithecus*, 2010. Painting on photographic paper, exposed to light, and then fixed with photographic fixer.

**Francesca Recchia** Kabul

**Afghanistan Untitled | Reading**

Entangled in the constraints of a war economy and inescapable geopolitics, Afghan contemporary artists strive to gather and develop new meanings in relation to the Self, their practice, community, national, and ethnic belonging, and history and heritage. Francesca Recchia's performative reading addresses these issues in a collection of thoughts that aim to disentangle the complexity of being Afghan by looking at the role that different actors play, the importance of mentorship, education and dialogue, and the urgent need to de-exoticize Afghan art and artists.

**BIO** Francesca Recchia is a researcher and writer based in Kabul, where she is currently working as the acting Director of the Institute of Afghan Arts and Architecture at Turquoise Mountain. Her work is grounded on an interdisciplinary approach that combines urban, visual and cultural studies specifically through her research in the geopolitical dimension of cultural processes and the creative practices and intangible heritage of countries in conflict. Recchia has authored the books *The Little Book of Kabul*, *Picnic in A Minefield*, and *Devices of Political Action*.



Francesca Recchia's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Turquoise Mountain (Kabul).

**Bassem Saad & Edwin Nasr** Beirut

**This Ritual I Wish You Could See (Render & File) | Lecture Performance**

A lecture-performance by the collaborating artist duo that deals with rituals of war in the rendered image. The performance focuses on various political parties in the Middle East and their uses of virtual reality and video games in juxtaposition to Western military-entertainment mindsets. It takes the form of a documentary text made up of an ascending sequence of visual, sonic, and prose fragments. Applying the imagery of spiritual figures, as well as the masculinity of soldiers in computer-generated war environments, the simulations of sites and territories emphasize a variety of central historical, geopolitical, and identitarian narratives.

**BIOS** Bassem Saad is an artist, writer and researcher whose practice often grapples with identity-based space, knowledge production, architectures of labor, market exchanges, and interfaces including affect or bodily pleasure. He is the current resident fellow at Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace Program in Beirut and in 2018, Saad spoke at the Harvard University VES and showed his work in the Dutch Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennial. His video works have been screened in Beirut, Paris, and Rimini.



Edwin Nasr is an independent writer/researcher and former journalist based in Beirut, Lebanon. His writings, which focus on decolonial praxis, queer subjectivities, and radical political formations, have been featured in publications such as *The Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement*, *ArteEast*, *Muftah Magazine*, *Reorient*, and *Counterpunch*. Nasr has recently given a talk at Harvard University VES and is currently the communications coordinator at Ashkal Alwan, a non-profit committed to contemporary artistic practice, production, and research.

Azizullah Hazara, *Untitled*, 2016. C-type print on paper. Bassem Saad & Edwin Nasr, *This ritual I wish you could see (Render and file)*, 2018. HD video still.

**Sam Samiee** Tehran



**Adab: Collecting within Chaos | Talk**  
 “The painter’s attention was collected in the reflection of her beauty, As he reached the hair flock, at last, he painted chaos.” – King Mohammad Dara Shokuh

Sam Samiee’s research into psychoanalysis, Manichaeism, and the Persian code of conduct, *Adab*, collects, reconstructs, and resignifies epistemic frames of mind for navigation through time and space. Samiee claims that psychoanalysis, a climate of ideas rooted in psychology, is the only robust Neoplatonist discourse in

the Western world. Manichaeism, a lost religion made up of a shared history stretching from Britain to Southeast China, is the origin of much of Sufi and mystic literature and art, while the *Adab* is a modus operandi that collects through the negation and negotiation of the aesthetic-ethical plane. Such produced prehistory is a framework through which both Samiee’s painting and curatorial practice may be contextualized.

**BIO** Sam Samiee is a painter and essayist with a background in Persian literature, art history, and psychoanalysis. Samiee dedicates a majority of his time studying the many different histories and theories about painting and actively practices them against each other. In his most recent exhibitions, *Love Got Lost (displaced)*, *Intellect fallen after i* at Gemeentemuseum the Hague, and *Unfinished Copernican Revolution* at Berlin Biennale X, Samiee presented his paintings alongside readings of the psychoanalytic revision of *Seduction Theory* of Laplanche with other international forms of literature in attempts to reinstall the canon of art history.

Sam Samiee’s FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Dastan Gallery (Tehran).

**Moe Satt** Yangon

**Face & Fingers, F n' F & Other Side of the Revolution | Performances**

Born in Myanmar, Moe Satt is an emerging millennial artist persistently concerned with the socio-political conditions that his people have been subjected to. Using the body as his foremost medium, hand gestures and symbols are essential to Satt’s practice. He uses patterns derived from religion, social history, and popular culture as a citational tool to express attitudes, raise questions, and provoke awareness.

**BIO** Moe Satt is a curator and artist who lives and works in Yangon, Myanmar. After finishing his degree in Zoology in 2005, Satt started creating art. He founded and organized Beyond Pressure, an international festival of performance art in Myanmar and has participated in live arts festivals throughout Asia and Europe. He has been invited to serve as the resident artist at locations such as the International Residence at Recolets (Paris, 2015) and ACC (New York, 2017). In 2015, Satt was a finalist for the Hugo Boss Asia Art Award 2015.



Moe Satt’s FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Alserkal Avenue (Dubai).

24 **Sam Samiee, The Map of USA, 2018.** Acrylic on canvas and iPad painting prints. Installation for Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art. Courtesy of Christoph Blaas. **Moe Satt, Face & Fingers, 2017.** Performance shot.

**Ali Shayesteh** Hamadan



**Thousand Curses on This and on That | Pop-up Installation**

In two different series, the artist uses 10 years worth of compiled personal notes and pieces of rag found in his studio to create works using the hypnosis of language to manifest new realities. Despite Shayesteh’s initial attempts to destroy these notes, he later found remnants of them in his studio, viewing this discovery as a spiritual resurrection. Using humanity’s dictims, the artist addresses society’s restrictions through idioms and expressions, to transform them into timeless liberating insights.

Deriving from this original series, Shayesteh gives up the use of language and words in his second series, producing work made up of simple utterances which disband the formula of language.

**BIO** Ali Shayesteh was born in 1984 in Hamadan, Iran, right in the midst of the eight years’ Iran-Iraq war. Influenced by the Islamic Revolution’s rigid idealism, Shayesteh’s artworks grew into personal reflections on the living conditions of that period. Through different series of work, he has experimented with various tools and techniques and rejected to follow any stable methods or styles. His artworks have been displayed in eminent Iranian galleries such as Azad, Assar, Mohsen, Delgosh, Etemad, Mah-e Mehr, and Lajevardi Foundation as well as the Giorgio Cini Foundation (Italy) and Pratt Institute of New York (USA).

**Zolaykha Sherzad** Kabul & New York

**Zarif Design Center | Pop-up Installation**

Founded and directed by Sherzad and based in Kabul, Zarif Design Center aims to preserve traditional Afghan design by merging them with modern aesthetics to create fashion that is distinctive and timeless. Zarif currently employs and trains 52 local Afghan workers, and practices ‘slow’ production in the form of hand-crafted work and detailing. The use of natural dyes and traditional fabrics from Afghanistan and Central Asia along the traditional Silk Road foster fair-trade practices. Zarif provides a platform where traditional high-quality craftsmanship is a source of economic opportunity and personal fulfillment. At its core, Zarif acts as an ambassador, sharing the rich cultural heritage of Afghanistan and its people with the rest of the world. Incorporated in the pop-up are rugs by the renowned Afghan designer **Rahim Walizada**.



**BIO** Zolaykha Sherzad is an Afghan artist, fashion designer, and founder of School of Hope (SoH) and Zarif Design. Herzad has participated in a number of international art shows including the Venice Biennale 2009 and dOCUMENTA 13 – 2012 in Kassel, Germany, where she represented her country with magnificent aerial silk sculptures. Sherzad is the recipient of The International Alliance for Women’s 2012 World of Difference Award.

**Ali Shayesteh, May God Consign You to Hell, 2015.** From the “Thousands of Curses on This and on That” series. Ink on oil-smear handkerchief. **Zolaykha Sherzad, White & Grey** wool coat with hand made embroidery work

**Vladislav Sludskiy & Olga Veselova** Almaty

**Limited Liability Pavilion 4.0 | Pop-up Installation**

Sludskiy and Veselova contribute works from 17 artist's private collections formed by donations from their friends, colleagues, and partners throughout the years. In Kazakhstan, which has just recently begun to create infrastructure to aid the arts, institutions are still learning how to fundraise, collect and form educational programs without ideological interferences from the government. Thus, artists have been forced to fulfill the role of public entities in archiving their own practices, in addition to collecting works by fellow artists. Unlike works in private or national collections, these works were not commissioned or acquired but accumulated without the intrusion of a third party. This form of collecting relies on artistic inspiration, trust and intimacy devoid of the influential mechanisms prevalent within the art market.



**BIOS** Vladislav Sludskiy is manager and curator at Ethan Cohen Gallery in New York. He organizes the annual ARTBAT FEST in Almaty, Kazakhstan and is co-founder and curator of the Eurasian Cultural Alliance (ECA) dedicated to supporting cultural infrastructure in Kazakhstan and representing local artists internationally. ECA has supported exhibitions at notable venues such as the PERMM Museum of Contemporary Art, Russia, the Strasbourg Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMCS) France, the National Museum of Kazakhstan, Astana and Kastejev Museum of Fine Arts, Almaty.

Olga Veselova is the Director of ARTBAT FEST, an annual international contemporary art festival in Almaty, Kazakhstan and the Deputy Director of the Eurasian Cultural Alliance. Veselova is also the co-founder of the public cultural space ARTPOINT and is an ongoing consultant for the annual festival Urban Art Astana. She has been a writer for the *Central Asian Journal of Art Studies* since 2016 and was recently a consultant for Astana EXPO 2017 and the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art.

Vladislav Sludskiy & Olga Veselova's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Eurasian Cultural Alliance (Almaty).

**Haiyang Wang** Beijing

**The Birth of the Word, to the Demise of the Bird | Pop-up Installation**

Pastel works on loan from a private collection, and an animation video by the artist from his 2014 series manipulates language as a device to create semiotic connections between actions, progressing the plot in a visual wordplay of double entendres. Invoking surreal scenarios, Haiyang's animation work is a revolving mechanism with no specific beginning or outcome. Rather, it contains an obsession-like circulation of reactions, resulting in the regeneration, substitution, disruption and construction of imagery. Animation enables Haiyang the freedom to resonate with the magnetic attraction of his visual elements, yielding to the naturally orchestrated collection of events in his storyline.



**BIO** Haiyang combines painting and animation to expand the rhetorical scope of these two media. More recently, Wang's work has begun venturing into sculpture and installations. Critically acclaimed by more than 50 International festivals, Haiyang Wang's first animation movie *Freud, Fish and Butterfly* won a Grand Prize at the Holland Animation Film Fest (HAFF) in 2010. His recent solo gallery shows include Capsule Shanghai and White Space Beijing (2018). Other institutions who have shown his work include OCAT in Xi'an, China (2017), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing, and Minsheng Art Museum in Shanghai (2016).

Haiyang Wang's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Capsule Shanghai.

Kyzyl Tractor, *Hoe*, 2015. Readymade with a star. Haiyang Wang, *The Birth of the Word, to the Demise of the Bird*, 2014-2018. Pastel on sandpaper



**Wong Kit Yi & Ali Wong** Hong Kong & New York

**Magic Wands Batons and DNA | Lecture Performance**

Combining the two projects *North Pole Futures* and *Magic Wands, Batons and DNA Splicers*, Wong Kit Yi-Ali Wong creates a lecture performance switching between a PowerPoint style presentation and a Karaoke music video. *North Pole Futures*, originally done in 2015, allowed patrons to commission a customized artwork to be made by the artist in the Arctic, while the latter project asked what if, instead of owning an artwork, a patron could rent it on a 99-year lease preserved in a paper contract and on strings of DNA. Each project plays with the relationships between artists, patrons, and collectors questioning what each would be like in the opposing role, as well as how altruistic the process of collecting art is.

**BIO** Wong Kit Yi & Ali Wong is a Hong Kong-born artist working in New York. Her artistic interest has long centered on odd scientific findings and the dysfunctional marriage between science and pseudoscience. She is the current 2017/2018 Shift Resident at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts. Wong's solo shows have included *Magic Wands, Batons and DNA Splicers* at Art Basel in Hong Kong (2018) and *Futures, Again, Pl* in New York (2017). Additionally, her works have been included in group projects at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Riga; Para Site, Hong Kong; and the Queens Museum, New York.

Wong Kit Yi & Ali Wong's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by Health Elite Club (Hong Kong).

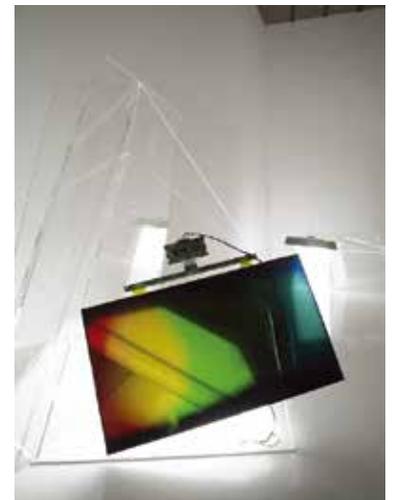
**Chongbin Zheng** San Francisco & Shanghai

**On Experiential Aesthetics | Talk**

A talk surrounding the artist's recent interventions within the spaces of several historic gardens exploring both the cultural and natural modes of being in the world. Zheng will discuss the site-specific installations involving light, space, video and his interdisciplinary workshop. One is developed through interactions with a resident Monk at Kenninji, the oldest Zen monastery in Japan, and the other is a project which ponders Chinese notions of self-cultivation, movement and embodied perception through the design of an urban replica of a Suzhou scholar's garden-courtyard in China. Through this presentation, the artist seeks to start a new dialogue with local artists and curators in Dubai on the historic functions and experiential aesthetics of the garden in the Middle East.

**BIO** Throughout his three-decade long career, Chongbin Zheng has held the classical Chinese ink tradition and Western pictorial abstraction in productive mutual tension. Systematically exploring and deconstructing their conventions and constituents, he has developed a distinctive body of work that makes the vitality of matter directly perceptible. Zheng's work can be found at the British Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, among many others.

Chongbin Zheng's FIELD MEETING participation is supported by INK Studio (Beijing).



Wong Kit Yi/Ali Wong, *shots of Uploading Consciousness to a Lotus Root*, 2018. Single channel HD video, edition of 5. Chongbin Zheng, *Walking Penumbra*, 2018. Installation documentation.

# Your FIELD MEETING notes

## Special Thanks

A heartfelt thank you to **Alserkal Avenue** and their entire team for hosting FIELD MEETING Take 6. We would also like to thank all participating artists, organizations, and colleagues, as well as ACAW Consortium Partners and supporting institutions who have contributed to this program.

## Curator's Bio

### **Leeza Ahmady**

Born and raised in Afghanistan, Ahmady is an independent curator and has been the Director of Asia Contemporary Art Week (ACAW) since 2005. She has connected New York and Asia's leading institutions in citywide exhibitions & programs with over 2,000 artists presented in 12 editions of ACAW in New York. Since 2014, she has staged the significant activities of 200 creative minds in 5 iterations of FIELD MEETING forum hosted at The Metropolitan Museum, Asia Society, Performa, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and SVA Theatre. She was an Agent for DOCUMENTA (13) exhibitions in Kasel, Germany and Kabul, Afghanistan (2010-2013) and has presented numerous exhibitions, workshops and public programs at local and international venues, including the Museum of Modern Art, Independent Curators International, Queens Museum, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Cornell University, Venice Biennial and Istanbul Biennial amongst many others.

## ACAW / FIELD MEETING Team

<b>Leeza Ahmady</b>	Director & Curator
<b>Anny Chang</b>	Website and Graphic Design
<b>Maryam Ghoreishi</b>	Curatorial Fellow
<b>Sarah Sloan</b>	Curatorial Assistant & Editorial Fellow
<b>Shivani Vyas</b>	Platform Coordinator

## Thinking Projects Respondents

<b>Saira Ansari</b>	Independent Researcher and Writer
<b>Alina Hannah</b>	Director of Concrete at Alserkal Avenue
<b>Uns Kattan</b>	Programmes Manager at Art Jameel
<b>Laura Metzler</b>	Curator at Maraya Art Centre
<b>Nada Raza</b>	Research Curator at the Tate Research Centre: Asia
<b>Mari Spirito</b>	Executive Director and Curator of Protocinema
<b>Craig Yee</b>	Director of Ink Studio, Beijing-based gallery and experimental art space

# FABRIC(ATED) FRACTURES

9-23 MARCH 2019

An exhibition of works by Bangladeshi, South Asian, and Southeast Asian artists exploring 'sensitive spaces'.

In collaboration with the Samdani Art Foundation.

## CONCRETE

Alserkal Avenue, Dubai  
concrete.ae

## ACAW Consortium Partners

\*Consortium Partners supporting the participation of select FIELD MEETING Participants

**\*Alserkal Avenue**  
Abdelmonem Bin Eisa Alserkal

**ArtAsiaPacific**  
Elaine Ng

**ArteEast**  
Beth Stryker

**Asia Art Archive in America**  
Jane Debevoise

**Asia Society Museum**  
Boon Hui Tan & Michelle Yun

**Christies**  
Deepanjana Klein

**DAG**  
Akshay Adicem

**DOOSAN**  
Clark Kim, Jiyeon Paik

**Eli Klein Gallery**  
Eli Klein

**\*INK STUDIO (Beijing)**  
Craig Yee & Britta Erickson

**Japan Society**  
Yukie Kamiya

**\*M+ (Hong Kong)**  
Suhanya Raffel

**Mana Contemporary**  
Ysa Pinyol

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**  
Ian Alteveer

**The Museum of Modern Art**  
Jay Levenson

**Owen James Gallery**  
Owen Houhoulis

**Queens Museum**  
Hitomi Iwasaki

**\*Reversible Destiny Foundation\***  
Miwako Tezuka

**\*Richard Koh Fine Art (Kuala Lumpur)**  
Richard Koh

**\*Ronin Gallery**  
David Libertson

**\*Roya Khadjavi Projects**  
Roya Khadjavi Heidari

**Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum**  
Alexandra Munroe & Christina Yang

**Sundaram Tagore Gallery**  
Sundaram Tagore

**SVA MA Curatorial Practice**  
Steven Henry Madoff

**Tina Kim Gallery**  
Tina Kim

**\*Twelve Gates Arts**  
Atif Sheikh & Aisha Khan

**Tyler Rollins Fine Art**  
Tyler Rollins

**Ulterior Gallery**  
Takako Tanabe

**Sylvia Wald & Po Kim Foundation**  
Young Cho & Ann Thurmond

**+91 Foundation**  
Arani & Shumita Bose

## FIELD MEETING Supporting Institutions & ACAW Participants

**British Council** (London), **Capsule Shanghai** (Shanghai), **Clark House Initiative** (Mumbai), **Dastan Gallery** (Tehran), **Eurasian Cultural Alliance** (Almaty), **Health Elite Club** (Hong Kong), **Hivos** (The Hague), **Mah Art Gallery** (Tehran), **National Culture and Arts Foundation of Taiwan**, **PSM Gallery** (Berlin), **Turquoise Mountain** (Kabul), **Vadehra Art Gallery** (New Delhi), **Zarif Design** (Kabul & New York)

**ACAW** Asia Contemporary  
Art Week

ALSERKAL AVENUE

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Outreach partners

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ACAW is a non-profit curatorial & education platform fiscally sponsored by the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA).

FIELD MEETING Take 6 forum concludes a constellation of ambitious signature programs for the 13th edition of Asia Contemporary Art Week (ACAW), the annual educational and curatorial platform in New York (Sept. 5th - Nov. 2nd, 2018). Center stage to this iteration's programming was *Thinking Collections*, the conceptual framework through which over 30 leading institutions and galleries presented cutting-edge exhibitions, performances, discussions & festivities city-wide. Exploring the act of collecting beyond an art market lens, ACAW's steadfast process-oriented approach to exhibition-making reclaims "collections" as the living energy of people: their research, processes, and meaningful activities.

Full schedule & details at [ACA.W.INFO](http://ACA.W.INFO)

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