



**For Immediate Release**

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**Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Presents**  
***Audience as Subject, Part 2: Extra Large***



*Sweaty* from the *Mosh* series by Elaine Constantine, courtesy of Santucci & Co.

**Saturday, February 18, 2012 – Sunday, May 27, 2012**

**Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94103  
415.978. ARTS (2787), [www.ybca.org](http://www.ybca.org)**

**Gallery Tickets: \$7 Regular; \$5 Seniors/Teachers/Students; Free YBCA Members**

SAN FRANCISCO – (January 10, 2012) *Audience as Subject* is a two-part exhibition that turns the lens towards audiences at live events, exposing the dramatic and narrative potential of spectator experiences at venues of varying types and scales. These works of photography, video and other media comment on the larger changes in contemporary ideas about participation in public life. The real-life gatherings they depict are set against new ways of thinking about social interaction in an age when virtual worlds, electronic friendship and texting have changed the ways that we participate in communities of like-minded people with similar interests, cultural affiliations and political leanings.

The artists in *Audience as Subject: Part 2: Extra Large* represent how audiences look, how they behave and where they gather, as one way of understanding the attraction that being among others has had in recent years. They examine the behavior of the individuals that make up the collective – their body language, facial expressions, attitudes, gestures, actions and energy – through drawing, painting, photography and video. These images explore the ways we perform the roles of spectator and fan, and uncover our fervent desire to take part in shared experiences on a massive scale. They challenge our perceptions about participation in public life as they reveal what we collectively become when we gather together.

Artists include: Andrea Bowers, Elaine Constantine, Stephen Dean, Jeremy Deller & Nick Abrahams, Andreas Gursky, Alexey Kallima, Gonzalo Lebrija, Ryan McGinley, Rabih Mroué, Paul Pfeiffer, Melanie Smith, and Wang Qingsong.

The first part of the exhibition, *Audience as Subject, Part 1: Medium*, took place from October 30, 2010 to February 6, 2011 and focused on audiences as social citizens and participant viewers of cultural events at theaters, cinemas, TV studios and plazas. It included the following artists: Ulla Von Brandenburg, Danica Dakić, Adrian Paci, Gabriel Acevedo Velarde, Stefan Constantinescu, caraballo-farman and Shizu Saldamando.

### **About the Art**

**Andrea Bowers'** series of drawings, titled *Study from May Day March, Los Angeles 2010*, focuses on individuals holding protest signs representing a range of political issues. These works focus on the efforts of individual protesters to craft the language and display signage for one of many pressing issues that people are facing in contemporary America.

A celebrated commercial photographer, **Elaine Constantine's** *Mosh* (1997) series was her first fashion shoot. The models portray a swarm of high-spirited music goers in a typical crowd-surfing scene at the front barrier of the stage.

With an eye to the role of color in popular culture and mass media, **Stephen Dean's** experimental documentary videos focus on the painterly visual patterns of the movement of people at live events such as a soccer match in Brazil and Pamplona's *encierro*, the traditional running of the bulls.

**Jeremy Deller and Nick Abrahams'** documentary about the fans of the New Wave band Depeche Mode brings to the forefront the mechanisms of a subculture associated with hard-core followers of a rock band, and sheds light into the heart of their devotion.

**Andreas Gursky's** oversized photographs tackle issues of mass audiences through exploration of the individual's relationship to progress and globalization. Shot from an elevated and distant viewpoint and fusing elements of the spectacular with the commonplace, Gursky's *Tote Hosen* and *May Day III* operate as the visual embodiment of globalization itself.

Covering all the walls of a room, **Alexey Kallima's** *Rain Theorum*, a mural-sized painting of a football stadium filled with fans, surrounds the viewer, who becomes the center of the gaze of the painted figures. Mixed with depictions of the audience representing the collective body of Soviet utopian ideals are various scenarios, with some clusters of people cheering and others shown in conflict with police, or exhibiting extraordinary behaviors. The crowd is a mirror image of the tensions between the collective, the individual and the state.

**Gonzalo Lebrija's** *Aranjuez* (2003) depicts the urban ritual of the traditional fans' street celebrations following a victory in a soccer match, to comment on Mexican sociopolitical reality as it is revealed by organic gathering and dispersal, and undefined incidents marked by tension and fear.

Between 2005 and 2007, **Ryan McGinley** followed Morrissey concert tours in the United States, the United Kingdom and Mexico, documenting their fans. Positioning himself within the crowd, he became a participant/observer, which transformed his objective documentary approach to that of an actual fan's experience. This heightened subjectivity is evident through the variable light saturation gradient used in the photographs, especially in lighting and coloration of individual audience members.

**Rabih Mroué's** work bears witness to the ongoing conflicts in Lebanon and the Middle East. His interest in historical narration, exclusion and remembrance plays a particularly timely role in the installation *The People are Demanding* and the video work *With Soul - With Blood* (2006). These works convey the importance of individual freedoms when engaging in political struggle. They are fueled by philosophical questions about the integration of individual wills during intensive moments of political change.

In examples from two different bodies of work, **Paul Pfeiffer** digitally removes bodies of sports players from commercially available footage from the N.B.A. and Muhammad Ali's fights with Joe Frazier. While the spectral outlines of the figures remain, Pfeiffer repositions the attention from the central action to the crowd's heightened excitement.

**Wang Qingsong's** *UN Party* is a photographic diptych of a constructed scene wherein 1,300 actors populate a large room with "U" and "N"-shaped tables and then vacate the space. These images reference the myriad international gatherings where the future is debated, as well as the disillusion they can leave behind.

**Melanie Smith's** *Aztec Stadium - Malleable Deed*, created in 2010, the bicentennial year of Mexico's Independence, features a performance of 3,000 youths at a stadium in Mexico City who collectively display iconic images from art history, national emblems and popular visual culture through the use of stunt cards. Their mosaic representations subvert the symbolic stature of historical images that ultimately fail to fully acknowledge the limits of national identities in relationship to modernity and mass culture.

"This exhibit considers the audience broadly as a living organism of participating viewers of live events," said **Betti-Sue Hertz**, YBCA's director of visual arts. "*Part 2: Extra Large* includes artworks that illuminate audiences as collective bodies, as well as the individuals that comprise them. It also demonstrates the true rush of being a fan that is the root of the volatility that is often ignited during, for example, large-scale rock concerts. This is an occasion where belonging is a simple act of showing up and being present."

"*Part 2* looks also at what is satisfying (and frustrating) about being in a crowd at a live event," continued Hertz. "What is the civic potential implied by different publics? French philosopher Alain Badiou asks, 'Why would a crowd which does not revolt against flagrant injustice actually constitute itself as a collective subject through the grace of theatrical summoning?' While these works acknowledge the role of media for disseminating images of live events, as well as the widening impact of virtual experiences of these events, this exhibition hopes to reconsider the corporeal experience as a primal site of social collectivity, exchange and potential."

*Audience as Subject, Part 2: Extra Large* is organized around YBCA's Big Idea DARE: Innovations in art, action, audience.

### **About the Artists**

**Andrea Bowers** was born in 1965 in Wilmington, Ohio and lives and works in Los Angeles. Bowers works in a variety of media, conducting extensive archival research prior to creating photorealist drawings, videos, sculptures, sound installations, and/or performances that emerge from the intersections between art and archival processes, and between aesthetics and political protest. Through a lens of feminist criticality, Andrea Bowers explores simple notions of radicalism and individual expression within society at large. She presents stories of activists to express a belief that dissent is essential in maintaining a democratic process, as well as to illustrate the importance of a political strategy that stands in opposition to violence and war. Andrea Bowers investigates the role of art in documentation, in-depth storytelling, and the reconsideration of historical recording through projects that contextualize historical events in our contemporary situation and underscore their poignancy in relation to our current state of affairs.

Bowers received her M.F.A. at the California Institute of the Arts in 1992. In addition to several group exhibitions, Bowers has had recent solo exhibitions at Secession, Vienna; Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg, Germany; REDCAT, Los Angeles; ArtPace, San Antonio; Core Program, Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Magazin 4, Vorarlberger Kunstverein, Bregenz, Austria; Institute of Visual Arts (Inova), the University of Wisconsin, and the Santa Monica Museum of Art. Among others, Andrea Bowers work is included in the following collections: The Guggenheim Museum, New York; MoMA, New York; MOCA, Los Angeles; The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Museum Abteiberg, Monchengladbach, Germany; The Ingvild Goetz Collection, Munich; and ArtPace, San Antonio, Texas.

**Elaine Constantine** was born in 1965 in Lancashire, Great Britain and has been working as a fashion and documentary photographer since the early 1990s with published work in British, European and American magazines such as *The Face* and *Vogue*. A dedicated follower of Northern Soul, Constantine has been photographing dance culture for over a decade and has brought the energy and choreography of club dance into the fashion and editorial photography she has made over the last ten years. In all of her work, she has developed a narrative form, which departs radically from the norm, constructing authentic scenarios and dynamic tableaux. It is her obsession with youth culture and a life-long passion for '60s American independent soul music that inspired Constantine to make her first feature film, *Northern Soul*, about a youth culture that changed a generation and influenced songwriters, producers, DJs and designers for decades to come. It is the tale of two Northern boys whose worlds are changed forever when they discover black American soul music. The film is scheduled to begin shooting in 2012.

Constantine's photographic work has been featured in a number of exhibitions and book projects including the 1999 Shoreditch Bienale, the British Council's exhibition of British fashion photography entitled *Look at Me* and the recent *Archaeology of Elegance* exhibition and accompanying book published by Steidl. Her work won a prize at the 1998 John Kobal Foundation portrait awards.

**Stephen Dean** was born in Paris in 1968, and currently resides in New York City. Dean's work in painting, sculpture, assemblage and film is an exploration of color and its use in understanding objects and experiences. Dean investigates material culture by assigning new meaning to ordinary objects through his color compositions, which highlight sensory association.

His videos expand the definitions of painting via the aesthetic qualities of the social and religious rituals that he chooses to film.

Stephen Dean's work has been shown at institutions such as the Guggenheim and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; at the Fond National d'Art Contemporain, Paris; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Fondazione Pitti, Florence; Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro; Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai. He has participated at the 2006 SITE Santa Fe Biennial, 2005 Venice Biennale, 2004 Seville Biennial and 2003 Istanbul Biennial.

**Jeremy Deller** is a celebrated British artist who makes politically and socially charged performance works. Born in 1966 in London, Deller studied art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, and later at University of Sussex, Brighton. After a period of unemployment at the end of his studies, he decided to explore the cultural and political heritage of Britain and its folklore. The result was a unique practice bordering on activism and focusing on transmitting the voice of the people. With collaboration and participation being central to Deller's work, he explains how "a good collaboration is like going on a long journey without a map, never knowing quite where you will end up." He is best known for the *Battle of Orgreave*, a vivid reconstruction of and documentary about a key battle between miners and police in the 1984/85 United Kingdom miners' strike. Deller won the Turner Prize in 2004 for *Memory Bucket*, a documentary that explores the state of Texas, focusing on two politically charged locations: the site of the Branch Davidian siege in Waco and President Bush's home town of Crawford. His retrospective show at Hayward Gallery, London is on view through winter/spring 2012.

Deller has exhibited at institutions throughout Europe and America, including Tate Britain, London, 2009; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2008; and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, 2004. He is represented by Art: Concept, Paris; The Modern Institute, Glasgow; Paul Stolper, London; Kristy Stubbs Gallery, Dallas; and Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York.

**Nick Abrahams** studied Art and English Literature at Exeter University and Art School, and came to filmmaking via directing pop videos for bands such as Leftfield, Gallon Drunk, Huggy Bear, Prolapse, David Holmes, Baby Bird, Comet Gain and many more. Since then Abrahams has continually been making films, documentaries and music videos. He is currently working on a feature film script about a boy walking home through the British countryside, and a variety of other documentary projects.

**Andreas Gursky** was born in Leipzig, Germany in 1955, and lives and works in Düsseldorf. His oversized, infamous and characteristic color photographs are distinct in their incisive, critical and almost existentialist look at the effect of capitalism and globalization on contemporary life. His work has been collected by museums around the globe. His images of impersonal mass audiences evoke a sense of detachment, coolly depicting the structures and patterns of collective existence that are often represented by the unitary behavior of large crowds, but at the same time create an emotional transgression to the unsuspecting viewer by exposing the reality of individual human insignificance. Gursky's photographs are influenced by various motives and genres from art and photographic history, to the human condition and pictorial language.

Gursky has exhibited internationally and is one of the most celebrated photographers of his generation, along with others from the Düsseldorf group. He has had exhibitions at Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Venice

Biennale of Architecture; 25th São Paulo Biennial; Shanghai Biennale; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Biennale of Sydney, and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, among others.

A refugee from Grozny, Chechnya, **Alexey Kallima** fled to Moscow—where he currently lives and works—shortly after the Russian invasion in 1994. Kallima's politically charged paintings and installations examine the ongoing Russian/Chechen conflict, reflecting the artist's interest in representing the heroism of the Chechen people, while revealing the segregation of this fractured culture. Employing ephemeral, fleeting materials such as charcoal, florescent paints and candy wrappers, Kallima's frescoes make visible references to graffiti, comic strips and the sports heroics glorified by the sublime socialist realism of Aleksandr Rodchenko and Aleksandr Deineka. The marginal characters present in Kallima's works represent the unstable duality of the collective body of a Soviet utopia united in exultation and the illustrious yet volatile revolutionary masses.

Kallima's work has been shown in numerous exhibitions worldwide including the Moscow Biennale; Russian Museum, St. Petersburg; Museum Fur Angewandte Kunst, Vienna; Art Brussels; Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin; White Box, New York; and the 53<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale. Kallima was the recipient of the prize for the Best Visual Art Work in the State Competition in Contemporary Arts INNOVATION in Moscow.

**Gonzalo Lebrija** was born in Mexico in 1972, and lives and works in Guadalajara. Lebrija's work investigates the spaces we share, involving both real and imagined political, social and economic narratives. He focuses on power, bureaucracy and hypocrisy in Mexican society, in particular and in the Western world in general. His photographs and installations are imbued with humor in order to unveil the faults of seemingly unfaltering political structures. By undermining steadfast political and business hierarchies, Lebrija questions the true pecking order of modern society.

Lebrija has had solo shows at Travesia Cuatro, Madrid; Galerie Laurent Godin, Paris; I-20 Gallery, New York; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City; Pilar Parra & Romero Galeria de Arte, Madrid; La BF15, Lyon, and Arte Contemporaneo, Guadalajara. He has also been included in numerous group shows and in collections in the United States, Mexico, France and England.

**Ryan McGinley** was born in 1977 in Ramsey, New Jersey and currently lives and works in New York. McGinley has created a wide-ranging body of work encompassing subjects such as skateboarders, musicians, graffiti artists and candid portraiture. His style evolved from documenting his friends in real-life situations enacting the daily rituals of contemporary youth culture. Exhibited at some of the most respected art institutions in the United States, these photographs of youthful rebellion occupy a precarious position between the seemingly disparate worlds of the art institution and the lifestyle magazine, a precariousness ultimately lending to their captivating nature.

McGinley has had solo shows at Foam Photography Museum, Amsterdam; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Castilla y León, Spain; PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others. He is featured in public collections at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

**Rabih Mroué** was born in 1967 and now lives and works in Beirut. He is an actor, director, playwright, visual artist and a contributing editor of *The Drama Review (TDR)* as well as a co-founder and board member of the Beirut Art Center (BAC). Continuously searching for new and contemporary relations among all the different elements and languages of the theater and other art forms, Mroué questions the relationship between space and form of the performance and, consequently, questions how the artist/performer relates to the audience. Rich in dramatic elements, his visual art practice has been directly influenced by his performing arts career. His works address the issues that have been swept under the table in the current political climate of Lebanon.

In 2010 Mroué was awarded an Artist Grant for Theater/Performance Arts from the Foundation of Contemporary Arts, New York and the Spalding Gray Award. Recent exhibitions include Performa 09, New York; 11th International Istanbul Biennial; *Tarjama/Translation*, Queens Museum of Art, New York; Sharjah Biennial; *Soft Manipulation – Who is afraid of the new now?*, Casino Luxembourg; *Medium Religion*, Center for Art and Media (ZKM), Karlsruhe, and *I, the Undersigned – The People are Demanding, Iniva*, London.

**Paul Pfeiffer** was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1966 but spent most of his childhood in the Philippines. He moved to New York in 1990, where he attended Hunter College and the Whitney Independent Study Program. Pfeiffer's groundbreaking work in video, sculpture and photography uses recent computer technologies to dissect the role that mass media plays in shaping consciousness. In a series of video works focused on professional sports events—including basketball, boxing and hockey—Pfeiffer digitally removes the bodies of the players from the games, shifting the viewer's focus to the spectators, sports equipment or trophies won. Presented on small LCD screens and often looped, these intimate and idealized video works are meditations on faith, desire and a contemporary culture obsessed with celebrity. More recently he has been creating models of stadiums as iconic spaces for gathering publics. Many of Pfeiffer's works invite viewers to exercise their imaginations or project their own fears and obsessions onto the art object.

Pfeiffer is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, most notably becoming the inaugural recipient of the Bucksbaum Award given by the Whitney Museum of American Art, 2000. In 2002, Pfeiffer was an artist-in-residence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at ArtPace in San Antonio, Texas. In 2003, a traveling retrospective of his work was organized by the MIT List Visual Arts Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Since that time, he has had solo exhibitions at institutions including Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria. He has collaborated with initiatives including The Project, New York and Artangel, London. His work has been featured in exhibitions at S.M.A.K., Ghent; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Castello di Rivoli, Torino, Italy; the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, the 49th Venice Biennale and the 2002 Busan Biennale.

**Melanie Smith** was born in Poole, Great Britain and moved to Mexico City in 1989—an experience that has enormously influenced her works ever since. Her work has been characterized by her re-reading of the formal and aesthetic categories of avant-garde and post-avant-garde movements. Her production is intimately related to an expanded vision of the notion of modernity, maintaining a relationship with what this means in Latin America (particularly Mexico), and with the implication this has for her formal explorations as a critical moment in the aesthetic political structure of modernity and late modernity. Her earlier pieces considered Mexico City itself, recording its multitudes, its violence, its banality, and its clandestine nature and at the same time its inherent decomposition. Recent works activate the relationship

between chaos and modernity using symbolic anachronisms, and the affects and affections of the social masses.

Smith's work has been exhibited at numerous institutions around the world including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; U.C.L.A. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston; Tate Liverpool; Tate Modern, London; South London Gallery; Lima Art Museum; Tamayo Museum, Contemporary Art University Museum and El Eco Experimental Museum, Mexico City, and Monterrey Museum, among others. Her solo exhibitions include *Parres*, Tate Britain; *Six steps to reality*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and *Spiral city and other artificial pleasures*, a retrospective exhibition that traveled from the University Museum of Science and the Arts (MUCA) in Mexico City to The Lab in Denver, and the M.I.T. List in Boston. She represented Mexico in the 54th Venice Biennale, 2011. She holds a grant from the National System of Art Creators of the FONCA (Mexico).

**Wang Qingsong** lives and works in Beijing. He was born in 1966 during the first year of the Cultural Revolution. His father died when he was 15-years-old and to support himself he worked in the oil fields of South Central China for eight years, applying five times to various art academies before being accepted at the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts, from which he graduated in 1991. He uses meticulously planned and constructed sets as a backdrop for photographic questioning of familiar cultural signs, symbols and skepticism related to China's recent rapid changes. Wang has developed a unique personal language for which he has become renowned. His works cut straight to the social realities of contemporary China which is the reason it is often linked to photojournalism.

Wang's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions and group shows around the world at institutions and events including MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen, Germany; Chinablue Gallery, Beijing; ECCO Contemporary Art Center, Brasilia, Brazil; Les Rencontres d'Arles, France; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, and International Center for Photography, New York.

### **About Yerba Buena Center for the Arts**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), located in San Francisco's Yerba Buena cultural district, is one of the nation's leading multidisciplinary contemporary arts centers. With a belief that contemporary art is at the heart of community life, YBCA brings audiences and artists of all backgrounds together to express and experience creativity. The organization is known for nurturing emerging artists at the forefront of their fields and presenting works that blend art forms and explore the events and ideas of our time. As part of its commitment to the San Francisco Bay Area, YBCA supports the local arts community and reflects the region's diversity of people and thought through its arts and public programming.

YBCA has selected four Big Ideas around which to organize its wide-ranging programs. They are: ENCOUNTER: Engaging the social context; SOAR: The search for meaning; REFLECT: Considering the personal; and DARE: Innovations in art, action, audience. These ideas, which encompass art from all disciplines, are designed to focus an investigation of contemporary art and its relationship to the larger world. Using the Big Ideas as portals, YBCA has established a framework of thought that invites exploration and risk-taking, quiet reflection and active engagement.

Performing arts, visual arts and film/video programs are curated thematically around Big Ideas which illustrate the connections and associations between the works. Public programs and YBCA's popular free open house series are dedicated to establishing a deeper understanding

and appreciation of contemporary art. YBCA presents programming year-round in the Forum, Screening Room, Galleries and Novellus Theater. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787) or visit [www.ybca.org](http://www.ybca.org).

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