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PRESS RELEASE

## PERFORMA ARCHIVE

*Commissions from Performa's Archives*  
20.06.–10.11.19

**Copenhagen Contemporary (CC) is pleased to present the exhibition *Performa Archive*, which provides a rare look into the legendary works created for and performed at the performance biennial Performa in New York. Through a weekly film programme, a Danish audience will now have the opportunity, for the first time, to explore Performa's archives, which contain some of the most prominent contemporary art performances created between 2005 and 2017 by renowned artists including Elmgreen and Dragset, Yvonne Rainer, and William Kentridge. To mark the exhibition opening, Performa's founder and director, RoseLee Goldberg, will visit CC in Copenhagen and give interviews as well as a public talk.**

CC wants specifically to work with international performance art. With a special subject track dedicated to performance art, CC attempts, via exhibitions and education, to make this art genre accessible to a wide audience and to show how, as an art form, it can foster a different encounter between art and audience.

With the exhibition *Performa Archive*, CC marks Performa's indisputable significance for the development and propagation of performance art within the past two decades. The exhibition offers Danish audiences a unique opportunity to get to know some of the most prominent performance works created during the period 2005–2017.

*Performa Archive* presents thirty full-length recordings spread over a week, all selected from more than seventy specially commissioned works in the Performa archives.

Here visitors can, for example, see Elmgreen and Dragset's humorous and dark institution-critical work *Happy Days in the Art World* (2011) and Yvonne Rainer's dance performance *RoS Indexical* (2007), a reinterpretation of Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring*. See and listen to Ragnar Kjartansson's twelve-hour-long opera *Bliss* (2011) or the composer Arnold Schönberg's German musical comedy *Erwartung*, restaged by the South-African Robin Rhode and performed at Times Square in 2015.

For the first time in an exhibition context, recordings of works from Performa 17 are shown, including William Kentridge's expressive interpretation of Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonate* and the South-African Kemang Wa Lehulere's extensive performance *I cut my skin to liberate the splinter*, an encounter of sound and movement inspired by African children's games. Kemang Wa Lehulere's work was later acquired by Tate Modern, London, for its collection.

## About Performa

Performa was founded as an organisation in 2004 by the acclaimed art historian RoseLee Goldberg whose time-honoured research into performance art has proved epoch-making for the genre. As the leading organisation dedicated to research into performance art, Performa addresses the role of this art form in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. At the heart of Performa is the biennial of the same name, forming the context for interdisciplinary works and special events involving dance, film, music, and architecture. Every other year in November, New York is transformed into the 'capital of performance art' where visitors can explore the city and the pioneering performances – a wholly unique art scene.

For each Performa event, new works are commissioned, developed specifically for the biennial by artists from a variety of disciplines. With these commissioned works, Performa often invites artists who have not previously worked with this art form to create performances for the first time. Over the years, some of the most influential names in contemporary art and performance have been engaged and invited to create works in new formats and explore new directions.

Since New York's first performance biennial in 2005, the organisation has established its identity as a commissioning and producing entity. Like a museum without walls, Performa is a vital platform for presenting and developing the live art forms. The biennial attracts a huge national and international audience with more than 200,000 visitors. Since 2005, Performa has presented almost six hundred works, collaborated with seven hundred artists, and toured with works in twenty countries. Performa 19 takes place in New York during the period 1–24 November 2019.

The exhibition at CC has been realised in collaboration with Performa, New York, and the Whitechapel Gallery, London. In 2017 Whitechapel Gallery presented the exhibition *Commissions from Performa's Archives: 2005–2015*.

## Information

Works from Performa 05, 07, 11, 13, 15, and 17 are screened on different weekdays. The printed programme will be available in the exhibition. More information will follow on our website.

## Artists

Edgar Arceneaux, Jérôme Bel, Sanford Biggers, Candice Breitz, Iona Rozeal Brown, Elmgreen and Dragset, Omer Fast, Tori Wrånes, Christian Jankowski, Isaac Julien, Jesper Just, Wyatt Kahn, Mike Kelley, Jon Kessler, Ragnar Kjartansson, Arto Lindsay, Liz Magic Laser, Russell Maliphant, Oscar Murillo, Kelly Nipper, Adam Pendleton, Yvonne Rainer, Raqs Media Collective, Robin Rhode, Mika Rottenberg, Francesco Vezzoli, William Kentridge, Kemang Wa Lehulere, Yto Barrada, Brian Bellot, Kris Lemslau, Jimmy Robert, and Mohau Modisakeng.

## Please note: Performa's founder, RoseLee Goldberg, to visit CC

To mark the exhibition *Performa Archive* and as part of CC's talk and debating programme, *Perspectives on Performance*, the founder of Performa, RoseLee Goldberg, will visit CC. As an introduction to the preview, the acclaimed art historian will give a talk about her long-standing work with Performa, the biennial, and research into performance art. The talk is a special opportunity to delve further into the history and future of Performa and performance art. The talk takes place immediately before the opening on Wednesday 19 June from 17–18. Tickets are 45 dkk (+fee). Find tickets on [Billetto](#).

## **About RoseLee Goldberg**

Founding Director and Chief Curator of Performa, art historian, critic, and curator. Her book *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, first published in 1979, pioneered the study of performance art. She is a former director of the Royal College of Art's Gulbenkian Gallery in London and curator at The Kitchen, New York; she wrote *Performance: Live Art since 1960* (1998) and *Laurie Anderson* (2000) and is a frequent contributor to Artforum and other professional publications. She has been named *Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters* by the French Government and awarded the Yoko Ono *Courage Award for the Arts* amongst others. In 2005, she organised New York's first performance biennial, Performa 05, and November 2019 sees the eighth biennial, Performa 19. Since 1987, Goldberg has been a professor at New York University and she is a frequent visiting lecturer at Yale, Brown, Princeton, and Columbia Universities and other major educational and cultural institutions in the USA and internationally.

## **Perspectives on Performance**

At CC, we want specifically to work with international performance art. With a specific subject track dedicated to performance art, CC wants, via exhibitions and education, to make this genre more accessible to a wide audience and to show that, as an art form, it is capable of facilitating a new kind of encounter between art and audience. *Perspectives on Performance* is CC's talk and debating programme which, via debates, performances, and talks, examines contemporary performance art and its growing popularity with audiences and art institutions alike. This is where the new forms of expression contained in live performance are explored and the challenges of this intangible art form are addressed in connection with exhibitions, acquisitions, collections, education, and audiences.

*Perspectives on Performance* is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation.

**The official opening of *Performa Archive* takes place on Wednesday 19 June from 18– 21.**

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Press kit and images are available for download from the CC website:  
<http://cphco.org/en/presse/>

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