

Press Release



Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art and Design



RITUAL WITHOUT MYTH 9 – 25 March 2012

**Danai Anesiadou, Erick Beltrán, Joachim Koester,
Patrizio Di Massimo, Ioana Nemes and Amalia Pica**
Also includes documentation of actions by Lygia Clark, Asco and Yeguas del Apocalipsis

Royal College of Art Galleries, Kensington Gore, London SW7
2EU

Press view: Thursday 8 March, 11am - 1pm

Private view: Thursday 8 March, 7pm - 9pm

Open Daily: 9 – 25 March 2012, 11am to 7pm

Free admission

www.ritualwithoutmyth.rca.ac.uk

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Ritual without Myth is an exhibition featuring international artists that consider the potential of ritual as a catalyst for transformative experience, curated by final year MA Curating Contemporary Art students at the Royal College of Art.

The exhibiting artists employ ritual in specific contexts as a means to reveal and undermine the status quo. The exhibition is a timely reflection on our shifting relationship to the dominant power structures of society and the associated myths that perpetuate them.

Including newly commissioned and existing contemporary works, as well as documentation of works that have taken place outside a gallery environment, **Ritual without Myth** explores art practices that combine cultural repertoires - actions and symbols that structure social systems - freeing them from the authority of a single, dominant myth.

Several artists are exhibiting work in London for the first time, including a newly commissioned, large-scale installation by Erick Beltrán (selected for Manifesta 8, 2010 and the 28th São Paulo Biennial, 2007) and Danai Anesiadou (who participated in the 5th Berlin Biennial 2008 and exhibited at Kunsthalle Basel 2011) and the UK premiere of work by Ioana Nemes. The exhibition will also offer the first opportunity for UK audiences to see together the two iconic 16 mm films by Joachim Koester, whose work has received acclaim in Documenta X and the Venice Biennale.

The title of the exhibition is taken from the idea of “rituals without myth” which was used by the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark to describe her work, in particular *Structuring the Self* (1976-1988), a therapeutic practice that explored the affective potential of her tactile *Relational Objects* through the mind and body of participants.

The artists share a concern for engaging the viewer as a participant through direct experience, they formulate confronting visual languages, which they use to upend or reconfigure ideologies and existing iconographies. Documentation of key works that took place outside the gallery space will further expand on how artists have addressed the exhibition's themes in social space.

Ritual without Myth's media partner is Mousse Magazine

ENDS

For further information or images please contact: Mette Kjaergaard Praest, Curating Contemporary Art on email: mette.kjaergaard@network.rca.ac.uk or mobile: +44(0)75 80381961 or Sue Bradburn, Media Relations Manager on 0207 590 4114; or sue.bradburn@rca.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

The MA Curating Contemporary Art Programme was established in 1992 with support from Arts Council England and is widely acknowledged as an important marker of current developments in contemporary art. The annual CCA show in the RCA galleries has become known for experimental approaches to working with artists, and for introducing new international artists to UK audiences.

The Royal College of Art is the world's most influential postgraduate university of art and design, specialising in teaching and research and offering the degrees of

MA, MPhil and PhD across the disciplines of fine art, applied art, design, communications and humanities. There are over 1,100 masters and doctoral students and more than a hundred professionals interacting with them – including scholars, leading art and design practitioners, along with specialists, advisors and distinguished visitors.

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About the Artists:

ASCO The Chicano collective made several performances on the streets of East Los Angeles in the 1970s and 80s which appropriated their own Mexican cultural traditions, like Dia de los Muertos, alongside the language of the contemporary political Chicano muralist movement. In the case of *Walking Mural* (1972), they physically inhabit this culturally specific imagery, wearing elaborate costumes and parading solemnly down a busy neighbourhood shopping street.

Danai Anesiadou, Born Germany, 1976. Lives and works in Brussels. In her performance and installation works Anesiadou layers cultural references with decoys, ritual and personal biography. Her influences come from left-field popular culture as well as canonical high culture, and include Chilean filmmaker and spiritual guru, Alejandro Jodorowsky, 'psicomagia' and the evil eye. For this exhibition she will create a new large-scale installation, which will also serve as the set for a public performance on Friday 16 March. Her work has previously been seen in the 5th Berlin Biennial (2008), Wiels (2011) and at Kunsthalle Basel (2011). She was a recipient of the prestigious I.S.C.P. residency in New York in 2011. Further information: <http://elisaplatteau.com/artist/danai-anesiadou/>

Erick Beltrán. Born Mexico, 1974. Lives and works in Spain and Mexico. Beltrán's work integrates different media including installation, writing, performance, sculpture and printed matter. Through an experimental use of diagrams, found objects and archives, his installations address the way in which symbols and social codes are defined, valued, classified and reproduced within contemporary societies. For *Ritual without Myth*, he has been commissioned to create a large-scale installation that embodies many of these notions, responding to the socially constructed nature of ritual and to the exhibition itself. The proposed commission will operate as a physical intervention in the galleries that will define the ways in which the audience navigates the exhibition space. Previous exhibitions of Beltrán's work include *Manifesta 8* (2010) and the 28th São Paulo Biennial (2007). Further information: <http://web.labor.org.mx/en/2011/03/20/erick-beltran/>

Lygia Clark. Born, Brazil, 1920 - 1988. Clark studied in Rio de Janeiro and moved to Paris to study with Fernand Léger in 1950. She was a central figure in Brazil's art scene in the 1950s and 1960s alongside Hélio Oiticica. Clark was one of the key personalities associated with the Grupo Frente and the Neo-Concretist Manifesto, and later she explored the healing and therapeutic potential of art. Clark often described her work as 'rituals without myth', in particular *Structuring the Self*, which took place weekly for up to a year, with single participants drawn from Clark's circle of friends, other artists, local prostitutes and even referrals from psychotherapists. This took form of hour-long sessions involving different objects placed on the body of the participant. No fixed meaning was prescribed to the objects or the experiences they elicited, instead the content of the work — its meaning and

'mythology' — was generated by the participant themselves, through their own subjective experience of the ritual.

Joachim Koester. Born Copenhagen, Denmark, 1962. Lives and works Copenhagen and New York. Two silent, 16mm films by Danish artist, Joachim Koester will initiate viewers to the exhibition. *To navigate, in a genuine way, in the unknown necessitates an attitude of daring, but not one of recklessness (movements generated from the Magical Passes of Carlos Castañeda)*, 2009, demonstrates fictional shamanistic 'magical passes', while in *I myself am only a receiving apparatus*, 2010, the use of a replica of Kurt Schwitters' Merzbau resonates with the notion of a ritual emptied of mythological significance. Koester has exhibited in the prestigious Documenta X (1997) Biennale di Venezia, Slovenian Pavilion, Venezia (2007), Italy, and the 29th Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil (2010). Further information:
<http://www.nicolaiwallner.com/artists.php?action=details&id=3>

Patrizio Di Massimo. Born Jesi, Italy, 1983. Lives and works Amsterdam. Di Massimo approaches historical facts, artifacts and political symbols in a direct and affecting way, working across the mediums of performance, video, painting and installation. He is particularly interested in the specific context of Italy and the myths that have arisen from its colonial interventions in Africa. Di Massimo will be commissioned to create a new work for Ritual without Myth and an existing film by the artist will be shown at a screening event on Friday 16 March. He is currently a finalist in the 2nd edition of the Italian Contemporary Art Prize at MAXXI, Rome and his work has previously been exhibited at Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam (2010), Art Statements, Art Basel 41 (2010), Whitechapel Gallery, London (2009) and Artissima 15, Turin (2008). Further information:
<http://www.t293.it/artists/patrizio-di-massimo/>

Ioana Nemes. 1979 – 2011, Romania. Selected works from the late Ioana Nemes's *Relics for the Afterfuture (Brown)*, 2009, treat the legacy of Romanian folklore as a socially constructed phenomenon, whilst reflecting on its current status as a product of cultural tourism and mass consumption in the post-socialist state. The works present a critique of Western modernity that is implied by the way she transformed materials associated with Romanian folklore, Eastern European modernism and mass culture. Ritual without Myth will premier the artist's work in the UK since her death in 2011.
Further information: <http://ioananemes.ro/> and <http://www.jirisvestka.com/artist-detail/ioana-nemes>

Amalia Pica Born 1978, Argentina. Lives and works in London. Amalia Pica's work includes performance, sculpture, filmic and photographic objects, as well as texts and ready-mades. This exhibition will present her work *Final de Fiesta (End of the Party)*, in which colorful paper garlands hang from the ceilings and walls of the gallery space, looking as if they had been left over from a past celebration. Bright but bedraggled, they resonate with notions of ritual practice emptied of mythological significance, evoking a sense of nostalgia for the vitality of a party that is somehow palpable in the quietness of the day after. Pica is the 2011 recipient of the prestigious Paul Hamlyn Award for Artists, as well as a grant from the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami. Her work was shown in

ILLUMInations - the 54th Venice Biennial (2011), and in 2012 she will be included in Generational Triennial, New Museum, NYC.

Further information: <http://www.marcfoxx.com/artist/view/2110>

Yeguas del Apocalipsis were active in Chile in the late 1980s and early 1990s at the moment of the country's transition from violent dictatorship towards democracy, when homosexuality was still criminalised and repressed. For the work *Refundación Facultad de Artes Universidad de Chile* (1989) the artists rode a black mare, naked and bareback, into the building of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Santiago, appropriating the Catholic image of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse and alluding to the Spanish colonialist Pedro de Valdivia, but also using the mare, a local homophobic insult, to draw attention to their own sexuality.

Image credits:

[RwM_IN1.jpg]: Ioana Nemes, *The white team (Satan)*, 2009, fur, leather, horns, gold, epoxide, paint, lacquer, wood, 170 x 26 cm, 5 unique pieces. Courtesy Jiri Svestka Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic.

February 2012