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MEDIA RELEASE

1 March 2023

Per°Form Open Academy of Arts and Activations

13-16 April, 2023

**Live @ 72-13, Mohamed Sultan Road
Singapore 239007
Home of T:>Works**

**Free admission with registration [HERE](#)
www.performfellowship.org**

***The inaugural Per°Form Open Academy of Arts and Activations: a porous space
bridging solidarities and knowledges in the precarious present.***

Per°Form Open Academy of Arts and Activations is the inaugural live gathering of 14 Per°Form Fellows from the Global South – Africa, Arab World, Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, South America – and its diaspora. These Fellows, intersectional practitioners across diverse disciplines of curation, research, education, visual culture, performance, will present their strategies for activating contexts and communities.

Per°Form is conceptualised and led by T:>Works Artistic Director, Dr. Ong Keng Sen. This fellowship platform began in March 2021 through the format of digital keynotes by Singapore fellows.

With Per°Form, T:>Works aims to cut across silos, disciplines, and fields to support contextualised research, situated practices, and translocal knowledge production as shared resources for the future. In particular, Per°Form focuses on the arts practitioner as a thought leader engaged in care and repair, actively bridging histories, the precarious present, and world-creating.

For Per°Form Open Academy of Arts and Activations, Dr. Ong draws inspiration from his seminal work investigating nomadic alternative universities and world-creating in the arts: The Flying Circus Project (1996–2013), as well as the Curator’s Academy (2018-2022) including the Berlin collaboration with Maxim Gorki Theater.

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Why an Open Academy? The Academy can be traced to the Greek classical centre of learning dedicated to wisdom and skill. Today, the Academy has developed into institutes of secondary and tertiary higher learning, generally with research or honorary membership, concerned about “the accumulation, development, and transmission of knowledge across generations, as well as its practitioners and transmitters.”¹ To this end, the Open Academy embraces alternatives to such a route, implying an openness which opposes hierarchical learning, refuses elite membership, and ultimately unpacks the institution into a porous space.

The Per°Form Open Academy aspires towards planetary consciousness. Achille Mbembe, the Cameroonian public intellectual, wrote: “For me, the planetary immediately evokes a connection between life and its futures on the one hand, and the Earth on the other hand. What comes to my mind is the biophysical organic material and mineral order — a geological magma-filled rock topped with the entangled orders of physical, organic phenomena such as plants, animals, minerals and so forth, as well as the artifacts and things and tools we have invented ... I find it almost impossible to think of the planetary without thinking about life and about the Earth. I probably owe that to my interest in the animist metaphysics of precolonial Africa. That’s the archive I draw on to propose this kind of understanding of the planetary as so closely linked to life, which itself is an indivisible process.”²

Dr Ong elaborates, “the idea of openness and porosity is even more important when we evaluate and redefine how we sustain liveability on Earth. We have arrived at a complex fusion of life and the Earth, rather than a separation of human and non-human. In particular, the planetary refers explicitly to the artefacts, things, and tools which the human has invented such as notations, writings, books, objects, stills, moving image recordings and the digital. There is also a connection made between animism and metaphysics, bringing in a spiritual, irrational realm which the human and non-human do not necessarily rationally include. Our emphasis in Per°Form is *living, multiplicity, and transformation* on this geological magma-filled rock.”

Central to the Per°Form Open Academy of Arts and Activations is a marathon format on 15 April stretching from 11am to 1am the next day, where the audience is encouraged to visit for an hour or two, or stay for as long as they desire. This marathon format has its precedents in the legacy of T:>Works’ *The Flying Circus Project* (1996 – 2013).

The 14 Global South Fellows are Aouefa Amoussouvi; Chidumaga Uzoma Orji; Giuliana Kiersz; Helia Hamedani; Keren Lasme; Ladji Kone; Martha Luisa Hernández Cadenas; Mona Benyamin; Nirlyn Seijas; Rah Naqvi; Renan Laru-an; Rola Khayyat; Soukaina Aboulaoula; Tara Fatehi.

¹ Wikipedia.

² Achille Mbembe, “How To Develop A Planetary Consciousness,” Interview with Nils Gilman and Jonathan S. Blake, *Noema Magazine*, Berggruen Institute, accessed 10 February 2023, <https://www.noemamag.com/how-to-develop-a-planetary-consciousness/>.

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Per°Form Open Academy of Arts and Activations is presented by **T:>Works**, an independent and international arts company based in Singapore at its space 72-13. T:>Works' mission and vision include the pioneering of thought leadership in the arts focused on transdisciplinary, transcultural, and inclusive processes. To this end, there is a strong educational perspective with research and discourse contextualising histories, contemporary experiences, and situated art practices of the global south.

For media enquiries, interviews and images, contact Sarah Bagharib:
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Annex 1

About Per°Form Global South Fellows



Aouefa Amoussouvi (she/her)

A multidisciplinary researcher, artist and curator, Aouefa holds a PhD in Theoretical Molecular Biophysics from Humboldt University of Berlin and was co-director of The Institute for Endotic Research (TIER) in 2020-2022. Her work explores rituals, technologies, intersectional and decolonial feminist narratives in science, and aims to create practices for collective knowledge production outside European and academic contexts. She also investigates technologies for healing and maintenance of transgenerational memories. She is currently training in process-oriented psychology. She has worked with SAVVY Contemporary, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Maxim Gorki Theater, Royal Holloway University of London, Laboratoire Kontempo, Disruption Lab, among others. At TIER, she recently co-curated the seven-month long project (June – November 2022) “Aurora. A Platform on Ecology, Interdependence and Mutual Aid”.



Chidumaga Uzoma Orji

A visual and experiential artist, and creative technologist, Uzoma is concerned with unpacking post-colonial crises of identity, fuelling imagination in service of progressive African futures, and exploring ancestral spirituality through a contemporary-day lens, all with a view to contributing to a liberated, free and healed African psyche. He has exhibited work at Here, There and Everywhere - Format Festival (2021), CultureHub – Re-Fest (2020) and LagosPhoto Festival (2019).

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Giuliana Kiersz (she/her)

A poet, playwright, writer and artist, Giuliana’s methods explore relationships with language. She reflects within specific contexts, to create fantasies that move social and political horizons. Giuliana intervenes through literature, performance and visual arts, to expand the political dimension of words from a feminist and decolonial perspective. Her texts received several awards including first place in the X German Rozenmacher Prize, third prize in the Argentine National Theatre Institute’s Dramaturgy Competition, and the Maison Antoine Vitez translation award. Her work has been translated into English, German, French, Portuguese and Tsotsil and published by Rara Avis Editorial, Libros del Rojas, Fondo Editorial ENSAD, Editorial INTeatro, Espejo Somos, Solitude Editions/Archive Books and Editions Espaces 34.



Helia Hamedani

An independent curator and writer, Helia is particularly interested in the transcultural field and collaborates with non-profit cultural associations. She has co-curated projects for inclusion and education through art for disadvantaged public schools in Rome. She is a PhD student of Art History at the Sapienza University of Rome and has held courses of contemporary art history in Tehran. Her doctoral research of the studies and visions of Ruyin Pakbaz, intends to shed light on the internationally overlooked research and accounts about the state of Iranian historiography of art.

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Keren Lasme

An artist, independent researcher and curator, Keren holds an MA in African Studies from SOAS University of London with a major in African Philosophy. Her interdisciplinary work is concerned with mythopoetic identity formation, knowledge activation and the use of fiction and imagination as spatio-temporal tools to conjure better presents and futures. Keren is interested in alternative spaces of (un)learning as dreamscapes and playgrounds to negotiate freedom, healing, revelation and reconfiguration of social imaginaries. Her curatorial and research practice engages with educational theory, the politics of care and pleasure, while using the collective memories and imagination archived in African literatures as praxis. “Kokoba: Meeting Our Griots”, a literary project for which she won the 2021 Prince Claus Seed Award, embodies this framework. In 2020, Keren co-edited SOMETHING WE AFRICANS GOT issue #12 on the cultural and intellectual movements of Mozambique in the 1950s.



Ladji Kone

Artist, dancer, choreographer, thinker and land-artist, Ladji began dancing as an autodidact in his neighbourhood. In 2003, the discovery of hip-hop culture channelled his exuberant energy, and breakdance became his research laboratory of the possible. His open approach and emphasis on complicity, maintains dynamism and perpetual questioning without prejudice. Ladji brings people together within the JUMP collective, working with artists and thinkers from various contexts. With his company Ciel K, he merges his universe with the visual artist Soly Volná to develop actions rooted in dance and design, in encounter with other artistic and scientific disciplines, so as to question social and environmental balance.

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Martha Luisa Hernández Cadenas | Martica Minipunto (she/her)

A writer and performer who studied at the Universidad de las Artes, ISA, Martha’s practice is in a permanent research on transdisciplinary process, with emphasis in poetry, archives and micropolitic devices. She has published “Días de hormigas” (Ediciones Unión, 2018), “Los vegueros” (Colección Sureditores, 2019) and “La puta y el hurón” (Caballo de Troya, 2023). She has participated in Experimenta Sur (Colombia, 2019), Panorama Sur (Argentina, 2019), Festival Sâlmon (Barcelona, 2020), Festival Poesía en Voz Alta (Mexico, 2021), Santiago a Mil (Chile, 2021), LA SERRE – arts vivants (Montreal, 2018), Young Curators Academy (Berlin, 2019) and Watch & Talk (Zürcher Theater Spektakel, 2020), among others. She is founder of the independent publisher Ediciones Sinsentido and coordinated a scenic laboratory called Laboratorio Escénico de Experimentación Social (LEES) from 2016-2020.



Mona Benyamin

A visual artist and filmmaker, Mona’s works explore intergenerational outlooks on hope, trauma, and questions of identity, using humour and irony as resistance and reflection. Her recent works have been screened — among others — at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), REDCAT, Sheffield DocFest, and Columbia University.

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Nirlyn Seijas (she/her)

A feminist, dance artist, teacher and curator, Nirlyn has a graduate degree in Contemporary Dance Studies, a Masters and PhD in Culture and Society from the Federal University of Bahia. Currently, she works at NAU (Nascente de Artes e Utopia) curating and guiding artistic residencies as well as community educational projects. She also directs, curates and teaches at OTRATIERRA – escola de ativismos, developing workshops, residencies, and the “Cycle d’Artivismes pour Décoloniser”.



Rah Naqvi (they/them)

Intrinsic to Rah’s practice is their queer identity. The materiality and techniques in their work are at play to create familiarity with the viewer. Through satire, whimsical props, and softness, one is made to believe something joyous awaits. Their most recent works feature tender and nurturing moments of queer intimacy and collective care. Furthermore, Rah questions the very nature of resistance for a queer person whose existence is a continuous act of defiance against normativity. This language of queer defiance extends to their practice of singing, alluding to the polyphonic nature of love and revolution while cautioning against the monotony of a choice-less future.

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Renan Laru-an

A researcher, curator and the artistic director of SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin, Renan creates exhibitions, public, and research programs that study ‘insufficient’ and ‘subtracted’ images or subjects at the juncture of development and integration projects. Since 2017, Renan has been the Public Engagement and Artistic Formation Coordinator of the Philippine Contemporary Art Network (PCAN), a recently initiated public institution for contemporary art temporarily housed at the University of the Philippines Vargas Museum. He has (co-)curated the 2nd Biennale Matter of Art, Prague (2022); the 6th Singapore Biennale, Singapore (2019); the 8th OK. Video – Indonesia Media Arts Festival, Jakarta (2017); and other exhibitions. Renan’s scholarship has been supported by the Foundation for Arts Initiatives, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and other fellowships. He was Curatorial Advisor to the 58th Carnegie International.



Rola Khayyat

An interdisciplinary artist, educator and curator, Rola’s work explores new dimensions on the representation of war, memory, and identity. She has curated shows in Beirut, Thessaloniki, and New York City, such as the BEYroute for the third Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Lattice Work at the Black and White Gallery, Simmer at Kunstraum LLC and Light in Wartime at apexart. Her work has been exhibited at the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, OKK/Raum29 (Berlin), Catalyst Arts and Belfast Photo Festival 2013, the 21st International Istanbul Art Fair and North of History (NYC). She received her B.A. in Historical Studies from the American University of Beirut (2003), a diploma in Intensive Drawing from the Florence Academy of Art (2005) and an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University (2016). She has received Magnum Foundation and Civitella Ranieri fellowships. Currently, Rola is an Assistant Professor at VCUarts Qatar.

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Soukaina Aboulaoula (she/her)

An independent curator and researcher, Soukaina is a member of Archive Sites, a platform for publishing and cultural research, where she co-curates the program “Publishing Practices”. She was awarded the COARC/Mellon Fellowship in Art History in 2021. Most recently, she co-curated with Yvon Langué as Untitled Duo, “If A Tree Falls In A Forest” at the Rencontres de la photographie d’Arles (2022), a collective exhibition exploring topics of perception, representation and knowledge within photography in Africa. Soukaina is currently pursuing a Master of Research (MRes) in Advanced Practices at Goldsmiths, University of London.



Tara Fatehi (she/they)

A performance maker, multidisciplinary artist, writer and performer, Tara’s works engage with ambiguity, playfulness, mistranslation, disjunction and unfinishedness. She has performed at the Royal Academy of Arts, Nuffield Theatre, Nottdance, Chapter, Julidans, and Montpellier Danse among others. Focusing on the interrelations of archives and performance, she has created the project and book “Mishandled Archive”, dispersing 365 fragments of family documents through performance and photography. She was the first ever resident artist at United Nations Archives in Geneva (2021). With Pouya Ehsaei, she holds the regular experimental music and poetry night “From the Lips to the Moon” in London.

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About Dr. Ong Keng Sen

Dr. Ong Keng Sen is Artistic Director of T:>Works and artspace 72-13 in Singapore. Apart from creating renown productions, Ong founded Arts Network Asia, a micro-grant peer organisation, and the international Curators Academy focused on synergy between contexts and curation. His seminal work was nomadic artist residency, The Flying Circus Project, traveling international artists through Asia, sharing their contexts amongst themselves and young people in local sites. Ong became Founding Festival Director of Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA), directing four editions. He was awarded the prestigious Fukuoka Asian Arts and Culture Prize for his creations in Asian contemporary performance. A Fulbright scholar, he was bestowed a honorary doctorate by University of Arts London. He was guest professor at Institute of Applied Theatre Giessen University and Freie University Berlin. He earned his Ph.D. in Performance Studies from Tisch School Of Arts, New York University in 2019.

About T:>Works

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