

KUNSTVEREIN

FÜR DIE RHEINLANDE UND WESTFALEN
DÜSSELDORF

Ei Arakawa

Performance People

May 12th – August 5th, 2018

Opening: Friday, May 11th, 2018, 7.30 pm

Welcoming: Georg Kulenkampff, chairman

Introduction: Eva Birkenstock, director

Kunstverein für die Rheinlande and Westfalen, Düsseldorf, proudly presents the first institutional solo exhibition of Japanese-born, New York-based artist Ei Arakawa. Since more than a decade, Arakawa produces and stages performances, hybrid scenarios, and erratic installations through interactions with various people and types of objects; artists, musicians, writers, and art historians as well as paintings and sculptural settings. Drawing on artistic strategies of postwar avant-gardes such as the Japanese Gutai group, Fluxus around the world, as well as New York performance art from the 70s through to the 90s, it is the repetition of art histories, the commodification of experience, the desire for authenticity, and the false intimacy of networks which he subverts in his works.

Following his exploration of painting's performative potential in *Harsh Citation*, *Harsh Pastoral*, *Harsh Münster* for Skulptur Projekte Münster 2017, Arakawa in *Performance People* revisits a seminal yet personal selection of performance art in order to re-evaluate the medium's agency in our event- and influencer-driven society. He proposes an alternative reading of performance art, where its time-specificity is activated through an astrological analysis of the specific hour and place of "birth" of each work provided by American artist Sarah Chow. Thus in his new multimedia LED installation for the Kunstverein, performances like *7360 Sukiyaki* by Tony Conrad (1973), *May I Help You?* by Andrea Fraser (1991) or Lee Lozano's 1971 *Untitled (Boycott Women)* are being addressed as "persons" with their own psychological tendencies, karmic purpose, and inter-subjective will power. How do performances think and feel? How do they want to relate with you? How do they manifest their medium-specific dreams?

The rhythm of the exhibition corresponds with the Mercury transits during the months of May, June, July. Produced in collaboration with Sarah Chow and German composer Christian Naujoks, visitors will encounter radio shows, essays, music, and fictional interviews throughout the Summer. Please check the website of the Kunstverein for updates.

Curated by Eva Birkenstock

