

Centre A presents

Maraya

Exhibition/ Public Talks + Walking Tour / Interactive Website

Exhibition: November 5 - December 17, 2011

Website Launch and Opening Reception: Friday, November 4, 2011, 8:00pm

Public Event Schedule: (Detail below)

Artists: M. Simon Levin, Glen Lowry, and Henry Tsang

Curator: Makiko Hara / Project Manager: Jessica Hum

www.marayaprojects.com

Website Sponsor: Government of Canada, Canada Interactive Fund

Website design by Work at Play with technical support Codename Design

Centre A is pleased to present *Maraya*, a large scale experimental and multi-layered art project consisting of an exhibition, series of public talk, walking tour and newly commissioned interactive website. *Maraya* (from the Arabic m'raya for mirror or reflection) examines the surprising reappearance of Vancouver's most picture-postcard urban development, False Creek in the United Arab Emirates, as the Dubai Marina. These two cities are pioneering sites for a new type of 21st century urbanism, the hallmark of which is the urban waterfront development with glass and steel condominium towers, expansive seawall walkways and shimmering urban vistas. *Maraya's* multi-faceted artwork will act as a mirror for publics in both cities to see themselves and their built environments reflected through the lens of contemporary art. In focusing on this significant case study of the two sites, the project aims to facilitate critical discourse reflecting on the global phenomenon of urban mega-planning, transformations, and its unfolding effects on our histories, economy, cultures, and everyday life.

Three Vancouver-based interdisciplinary artists and educators, Levin, Lowry and Tsang, have spent five years researching the phenomenal movement of architects, urban planners and development between Vancouver and Dubai and have produced a new body of artworks, including photo and video documents, interviews, video installations and a live video portal connection between two cities presented in the exhibition as well as in the new website.

"Maraya,—borrowing the arabic word for mirror and reflection— asks us all to engage in the remaking of our seawalls. To explore the thousands of images that chronicle the building of both waterfront communities from 2007-2011, building digital paths and connections between publics both here and there. Our online platform allows every viewer and contributor the ability to personalize (remix) each glance, each step, each paver, creating paired images that together delineate a metaphorical seawall that spans the globe. Within these user generated articulations, images and their parts are repurposed, connections made, commonalities revealed. These are the true moments and spots of exchange. These spots glow and flicker suggesting the simultaneous coming together of people, places and points of public-ness. Maraya invites multiple publics into the many visual and textual discourses that shapes our sense of here in all its uncanny similarities and its disarmingly blatant differences to a there."—Maraya

For the first time, Centre A, with the support of the Canada Interactive Fund, was able to commission the artists to develop an experimental internet platform. It invites publics to engage with the large scope of *Maraya* artworks, research documents and discussions for over five years. The website is designed to develop experimental models of interactive and collective art-making with the audience through online participation.

During the exhibition, Centre A organizes a series of public salons to approach the subject from a diverse range of perspectives; the speakers include Christos Dikeakos, one of Canada's most prominent contemporary artists, urban geographer Eugene McCann and social and cultural activist, Am Johal. A walking tour led by sound artist Jean Routhier will be held prior to the exhibition.

Public Events:

*All events are free of charge

Jean Routhier – Soundwalk

A Soundwalk From False Creek to Downtown East Side

Saturday, October 29, 2:30-4:30pm

The tour starts at Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre (181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver) front lobby and finish at Centre A.

Advance registration recommended: call 604-683-8326

Christos Dikeakos- Public Talk

Vancouver, speculations on False Creek

Wednesday, November 9, 7:00-9:00pm at Centre A

Eugene McCann and Am Johal - Public Talk

Mirrors, models and movements

Civil Unrest and the City: Spectacle and Social Justice

Thursday, November 24, 7:00-9:00pm at Centre A

M. Simon Levin, Glen Lowry and Henry Tsang -Artist Talk

Saturday, November 26, 3:00-5:00pm

Media Contact: Makiko Hara, Curator / Jessica Hum, Project Manager

604.683.8326 / info@centrea.org

Artist and Speakers Biographies

M. Simon Levin lectures within the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, University of British Columbia and in Critical and Cultural Studies at Emily Carr University and has published a curriculum on Contemporary Public Art. He creates site-based systems that explore the aesthetics of engagement using a variety of designed forms and tools that address our many publics. These spatial and pedagogical projects, expand the social agency of art making, rethinking notions of space and place, authorship and audience. Working collaboratively and primarily within the public sphere, Levin's work ranges from billboard projects, alternative tours of cities, land care centres and alternative mapping and telecommunication systems. Recently commissioned projects include a user-generated 'sousveillance' system and a global contributive new media platform, both showcased for Vancouver's 2010 Cultural Olympiad. He has been artist in residence for the Vancouver Parks Board, the TechLab at the Surrey Art Gallery, Emily Carr University and at the International Art Space, Kelleberrin, Australia. He has exhibited, lectured and published locally, nationally and internationally.

Glen Lowry is writer, cultural theorist and editor. He received his PhD in English from Simon Fraser University, where he specialized in contemporary Canadian literature and culture. Lowry's research focuses on collaborations among artist researchers and other academics. As one core member of Maraya since 2007, he has facilitated and participated in numerous presentations internationally and locally, including Art Dubai (2010), Learning From Vancouver symposium held at Western Front (2010), Interactive Futures '09: Stereo, and ISEA 2011 Istanbul. From 2001-2011, Lowry edited the Simon Fraser University-based cultural journal *West Coast Line*. *Pacific Avenue* (LINEbooks, 2009) is his first poetry collection. Lowry is the Assistant Dean of Critical Studies and Community Engagements at Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

Henry Tsang's projects have been exhibited internationally, incorporating digital media, video, photography, language and sculptural elements in the exploration of the relationship between the public, community and identity in the new global order. Projects in the public sphere range from community-based curatorial and engagement practices to permanent commissioned artworks. *Welcome to the Land of Light* is a 100 metre-long installation located on the seawall handrail along Vancouver's False Creek. He has also worked with artists' collectives which produce temporary public art installations on shared political concerns, including The Association for Noncommercial Culture and Collective Echoes Youth Public Artists Collective, and has mentored many young artists through various programs. Video installations such as *Orange County*, 2004, and *Olympus*, 2006, shot in California, Beijing, Torino and Vancouver, examine overlapping urban and socio-political spaces; and *Napa North*, 2008, looks at the relationship between wine, real estate and cultural translation in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. His curatorial projects (*Self Not Whole: Cultural Identity & Chinese-Canadian Artists in Vancouver*, 1991; *Racy Sexy: Race, Culture and Sexuality*, 1993; and *City at the End of Time: Hong Kong 1997*, 1997) span the local to the international. Henry received the VIVA Award in 1993 and is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr University of Art & Design.

Jean Routhier has an audio leaning art production. Routhier is an audio wrapper, his approach similar to a store clerk, bagging everything into their sonic essence. Interested in the gaps and gasps in sounds conducive to the transmission of tales he sometimes hears in the ether, Routhier finds inspiration in everyday situations. His work has been presented internationally and nationally at the Vancouver Vibrates, the Silence and Signal & Noise Festivals (Vancouver), ISEA 2006 (San José, CA), Open Air-Ars Electronica 2002 (Linz, Austria), Overgarden Festival (Copenhagen, Denmark), DLux Media Arts Festival (Melbourne, Australia), Global Mix Festival (Cracow, Poland), ICMC '94 (International Computer Music Conference, Florida, USA), La Panderia (Mexico City), École des Beaux-Arts (Aix-en-Provence, France), Studio Cormier (Montréal), Artspace Gallery (Peterborough, ON), Surrey Art Gallery (Surrey), Helen Pitt Gallery (Vancouver), Article (Montréal). His audio works have been featured on Kunstradio (Vienna, Austria), CBC and Radio-Canada. Jean curated for the Surrey Art Gallery a series of audio artists as part of its ongoing Open Sound exhibit, as well as helped organize its audio art symposium in 2008 and 2009. He is one of the organizers for the soundwalking group and radio host and producer of Soundscape on CFRO 102.7FM.

Christos Dikeakos was born in Thessaloniki, Greece in 1946, and moved to Vancouver at age ten, and where he continues to live and work. Dikeakos studied fine art at the University of British Columbia, and has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions since 1969 in Canada, the U.S.A., Europe and Australia. His work is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Vancouver Art Gallery, Mendel Art Gallery, MOCCA Toronto, the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery at UBC, Surrey Art Gallery, Canada Council Art Bank, and the Vorres Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens. Christos has been researching and photographing False Creek since the early 1960s; he has produced a new body of work titled "Vancouver Sites and Place Names" and built a series of structural components in False Creek North to explore the history of the False Creek basin.
<http://christosdikeakos.com/>

Am Johal is a social and cultural activist whose writing has appeared in Seven Oaks Magazine, Znet, Georgia Straight, Electronic Intifada, Inter Press Service, rabble.ca and many others. He has an MA in International Economic Relations from the Institute for Social and European Studies and is currently a part-time PhD student in media philosophy at the European Graduate School.

Eugene McCann is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at SFU. He is an urban geographer whose broad research interests focus on urban policy mobilities, the relationships between urbanization and globalization, urban drug policy, urban development, and urban politics, specifically the spatial and political strategies of groups involved in producing urban policies.

Acknowledgements

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