

Migrating Identity – *Transmission/Reconstruction*

May 22 – June 20, 2004, Arti et Amicitiae, Rokin 112 Amsterdam and surrounding public places



Fight or Flight, A public debate where the refugee in relationship to the artist, marginality and community will be addressed.

Organised in cooperation with the Gate Foundation
Moderator: Sebastian Lopez (AR/NL), director Gate Foundation

Conference:
Friday, June 4 10:00 - 15:00 (doors open at 9:30)
The Society, Arti et Amicitiae, Rokin 112, Amsterdam

Admission: 10 Euro
Including a Turkish lunch, coffee, tea and beverages

Reservations: <http://migratingidentity.net>

Fight or Flight

C o n f e r e n c i n g T r a n s m i s s i o n / R e c o n s t r u c t i o n

At the beginning of the 21st century, 130 million people are living outside of their homeland and every year the number increases by 120,000. As waves of migration, naturalisation, and social (re)forming on micro and macro levels carve deep tracks into societies worldwide, Europe attempts to be unified and at the same time builds a wall around itself, inhibiting a mutual exchange between the native and the immigrant.

A western European framework supposes the possibility of artists living in other spaces and places while offering an experience of the unknown from the security of a relatively insular position. While the focus of much art practice in the last decade has emphasized the figure of the nomad, the condition of the refugee is the ever-present other to this self-referred 'nomad'.

Conferencing *Transmission/Reconstruction* will initiate a dialogue between the nomadic artist and the experience of the refugee artist, concerning in particular the slippages of self, nationality, identity that are so characteristic of the current global condition. In cooperation with the Gate Foundation, Sebastian Lopez (AR/NL) will moderate a series of talks from artists, actors and organisations that have personal witness to such topics. By addressing particular issues in the Netherlands as well as Europe and abroad, the inside personal experience will be turned outwards through a day of dialogue and exchange.

Special guests will include:

Krishna Manjit Kaur, performance artist

dramatist and filmmaker, author of the book: *Moons, Myths and Marriages*

Today there are more than eight billion humans on this planet and the percentage that has access to reasonable water, food and shelter is twelve to fifteen percent. The nomad is still moving and translating his or her experience and is still motivated by the ancient reasoning: water, food and shelter. Even when the thread of time has given us the opportunity to settle and build civilization we create war and destruction in order to keep fear and movement part of our experience.

Bright O'Richards, actor

The use of the term *western* is indicative of the terminology of a self-representing territory of modernization and forms of stencil that can be transposed freely across the globe characterized by tropes of cultural modernity such as westernized and westernism. The *west* therefore is not a place so much as a cultural state of mind. Bright O' Richards, a Liberian residing in the Netherlands for the past 15 years, has appeared in a wide variety of theatrical projects and various cross-cultural interventions and exchanges from a primarily African perspective engaging and questioning the west in a north/south dialogue.

Sharmila Samant, visual artist

lives and works in Mumbai, co-founder of Open Circle <http://www.opencirclearts.org>

Imagine... a 14 year old anorexic 'model' sashaying down the ramp in one of the four fashion capitals making more money per minute than the twelve year old emaciated 'karigar' who will mass produce her outfit in one of the Asian sweatshops, making less than the same amount per year...

Sharmila Samant is neither a refugee nor a migrant, but who via her work HANDPICKED REJECTS (see website <http://migratingidentity.net>) offers a powerful critique of the market forces that define cultural practices of peripheral nations. Migrants from all over India come to work in Mumbai, some of them in these sweatshops. Samant's work deals with issues of identity within a global context, particularly looking at the homogenising effect of commodification in relation to developing economics.

Sebastian Lopez

Sebastian Lopez is director of the Gate Foundation, curator of the Shanghai Biennale 2004 and has published numerous articles on contemporary art.

Please see <http://migratingidentity.net> for further details about the exhibition and opening hours.

Press contact:

Gili Crouwel

00 31 6 43163313

press@migratingidentity.net

Download latest press release

Guest curators: Renée Ridgway, Simon Ferdinando, Sonja Beijering

Organisation: SEB Foundation, Wilhelminastraat 121-hs, 1054 VB Amsterdam

This project is made possible by the significant support of Arti et Amicitiae, Das Arts, de Groot & Klein BV, Duivendrecht, Gate Foundation, Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, Mondriaan Foundation, The Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture, VSBfonds, Hivos, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, and The Amsterdam City Council.