INTERMISSIONS

For the inaugural Intermissions performance, New York-based artist Xavier Cha presents In The News, a new work conceived for the Ren’s large open space. Creating a volatile scene for the watchful eyes of the crowd, two actors engage with each other and their surroundings in a hyper-physical encounter.

Cha’s performances and videos grapple with aspects of subjectivity and agency in the digital age. In dynamic ways, they explore our mutating senses of self and our relations to other people—fed by heightened circuits of self-spectatorship, voyeurism, or surveillance, but grounded as much as ever in the physical body.

Intermissions is a new programming series at the Renaissance Society devoted to ephemeral or performance-based works, staged in the empty gallery in between exhibitions. This recurring platform, organized by Karsten Lund, Assistant Curator, presents two major works every year, supporting a wide variety of live projects.

This series is funded by a grant from the Efroymson Family Fund.

Above: Xavier Cha, abduct, 2015, video still.
Over his 50-year career, Robert Grosvenor has produced a body of work that is at once solidly physical and conceptual, muscular and fluid. Grosvenor frequently melds industrial materials and found objects as he experiments with texture and scale, resulting in formal sculptures that reveal a handmade quality and subtle vein of humor. The works resist association, instead quietly and strangely asserting themselves both as assemblages of relationships and as discrete, holistic entities.

The centerpiece of Robert Grosvenor’s exhibition is an untitled sculpture from 1989-90, re-contextualized within a spare architectural installation. For this sculpture, at once monumental and human-scale, Grosvenor adapts the materials of infrastructure—concrete blocks, steel, Plexiglas and paint—evoking what critic John Yau has suggested is the labor of an “anonymous worker.” Twenty-seven years after its initial realization, how has our sense of this sculpture, from its formal language to its frank materiality, evolved or expanded?

This exhibition also provides an opportunity to generate new scholarship around Grosvenor’s oeuvre, further strengthening recognition of his significant contributions to sculpture in the 20th, and now 21st, centuries. Following the exhibition, the Ren will publish a new monograph featuring contributions by Yve-Alain Bois, Bruce Hainley, Susan Howe, and others.

SAT, FEB 11, 5–8PM
Opening reception
with talk by John Yau at 6pm

WED, MAR 1, 6PM
Exhibition walk-through
with Solveig Øvstebø, Executive Director and Chief Curator

DISCUSSION
MEANING AND MATERIAL
SAT, MAR 11, 3PM
KENT HALL, ROOM 120
1020 E 58TH ST
The focal point of Robert Grosvenor's exhibition is a work from 1989-90. The kinds of dynamics and implicit questions that are very present in Grosvenor's work are no less vital now. This program presents artists who will respond to Grosvenor's work, exploring potential resonances with their own practices. At the same time, the discussion will also serve as a jumping off point to consider aspects of sculpture today—whether hinging on the uses of common materials; the relation of the work, the space, and the viewer; or shadows of meaning in artworks that echo the built environment.

SCREENING
REMAINDER
EVENT INFORMATION AT RENAISSANCESOCIETY.ORG/EVENTS
Based on the mind-bending novel of the same name by Tom McCarthy, Remainder follows an unnamed man who is struck in the head by a black box falling from the sky. Having lost his sense of self, he uses the money from a huge settlement to buy a particular apartment building and pay people to re-enact his recent memories repeatedly until they generate in him a certain feeling. The first feature film by artist Omer Fast, Remainder mirrors the complex obscurities of the protagonist's mind, as the man tries to reconstruct things that have disappeared, confronting the materiality of his world in a search for a kind of authenticity.

LECTURE
JOHN YAU
SAT, FEB 11, 6PM
KENT HALL, ROOM 120
1020 E 58TH ST
To mark the opening of Robert Grosvenor, noted critic and poet John Yau will give a lecture about Grosvenor’s work. In a recent article, Yau writes, "Grosvenor is that rare artist. He sees what is in front of our eyes, and gets us to look again... It isn’t about what you see but about seeing." A prolific author, Yau has published over fifty books of poetry, fiction, and art criticism. Formerly the Arts Editor for the Brooklyn Rail, in 2012 Yau started the online magazine Hyperallergic Weekend with three other writers.

CONCERT
R. ANDREW LEE
WED, FEB 15, 8PM
BOND CHAPEL
1025 E 58TH ST
Denver pianist R. Andrew Lee is one of the most respected practitioners of contemporary music, a musician marked equally by pinpoint precision and remarkable nuance. Lee specializes in minimalist works and gained broad acclaim for his performance of the landmark Dennis Johnson composition November. His 2013 recording featuring the piano music of composer Eva-Maria Houben was named one of the top 10 albums of 2013 by New Yorker critic Alex Ross. Presented as part of the Frequency Series Festival of Chicago New Music in partnership with the Renaissance Society.

For the last exhibition this season, the Renaissance Society presents the work of two artists, Astrid Klein and B. Ingrid Olson. Through a selection of their collage, sculpture, and installation works, the exhibition allows room for an encounter with the artists’ distinct practices while also drawing out affinities between them. Attentive to matters of representation, Klein and Olson stage various approaches—whether confrontational in nature or more abstract—as a means to examine ways of being in the world today.

While working with text, physical materials, or photographic images, both Olson and Klein employ strategies of collage and portraiture to animate, and at times destabilize, issues of gender and identity. In doing so, their work looks at larger power structures, value systems, and social role models.

Klein has worked across mediums since the 1970s, experimenting with materials such as neon, polyester, acetone, resin, cardboard, and film. Olson’s photographs and sculptures are provisional meditations on the fundamental and ideological properties of her own array of materials, including leather, steel, wood, velvet, and glass.

Astrid Klein lives and works in Cologne. B. Ingrid Olson lives and works in Chicago.

SAT, APR 22, 5–8PM
Opening reception
with artists’ talk at 6pm

SAT, MAY 13, 3PM
Exhibition walk-through
with Karsten Lund, Assistant Curator
CONCERT

OLIVIA BLOCK
132 RANKS
FRI, APR 21, 8PM
ROCKEFELLER CHAPEL
5850 S WOODLAWN AVE

132 Ranks, Olivia Block’s newly commissioned work for the Skinner Organ at Rockefeller Chapel, emphasizes the instrument’s relationship with its surrounding architecture, and explores the line between musical composition and sound installation. Block has spent months studying the organ—the largest in Illinois—and how its sounds move around the chapel. Here she plays long tones on the organ while additional pre-recorded sounds come from speakers placed around the space. 132 Ranks includes both the lowest pedal notes, felt in the body, as well as the highest bell tones, at extreme dynamic levels.

A special project by the Ren and Lampo, 132 Ranks is presented in artistic partnership with the Rockefeller Chapel.

READING

RENEE GLADMAN
THU, MAY 25, 6PM
KENT HALL, ROOM 120
1020 E 58TH ST

Renee Gladman has published nine works of prose and one poetry collection. Her most recent book Calamities is a collection of linked essay-fictions on writing and time. Gladman approaches language as a space to enter and travel within, and her writing is attuned to the body as it moves through architectures of thought and experience. “The sentence is a street, a city for my narrators,” she says, or “a map of where we have gone and where we wish to go.”

Gladman’s reading coincides with the release of Prose Architectures, published by Wave Books. In this new monograph, Gladman explores the visual threshold between drawing and writing—“uncovering the moment whereby architecture emerges out of prose, the sentence becomes a drawing, and the act of writing narrative can be examined from bodily movements.”

CONCERT

GENE COLEMAN
DREAMLIVES OF DEBRIS
SUN, JUN 18, 3PM
LOGAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS, PERFORMANCE PENTHOUSE
915 E 60TH ST

Philadelphia-based composer Gene Coleman returns to the Ren for a dynamic performance of material from a new forthcoming media opera. Featuring acclaimed bass-baritone Nicholas Isherwood and Ensemble N_JP, Dreamlives of Debris is based on a novel by Lance Olsen that reimagines the myth of the Minotaur and labyrinth. While drawing on the lasting power of the myth, brought to life here by Isherwood’s voice, Coleman also integrates cultural sources as varied as Japanese Bunraku theater, manga, Monteverdi’s operas, and neuroscience research. The works will be staged by renowned director Luca Veggetti, known for his magical use of movement and light.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS TO BE ANNOUNCED
BOOK LAUNCH AND DISCUSSION

Books are a vital part of the Ren’s curatorial program. Developed closely with artists, publications serve in equal measure as a record of exhibitions, and as a site for ideas, experiments, and scholarship in the orbit of newly made artworks.

To celebrate the publication of three books—by artists Mathias Poledna, Irena Haiduk, and Ben Rivers—an upcoming program at the Ren will discuss the possibilities of artist-driven publishing, including both institutional and independent outlooks.

RENAISSANCESOCIETY.ORG/EVENTS WILL HOST A FULL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.

Forthcoming titles:

BETWEEN THE TICKS OF THE WATCH
with Kevin Beasley, Ranjit Hoskote, Solveig Øvstebø, Falke Pisano, Heidi Salaverría, and Richard Shiff

SADIE BENNING
co-published with Kunsthalle Basel
with Julie Ault, Elena Filipovic, Christine Mehring, and others

ROBERT GROSVENOR
with Yve-Alain Bois, Bruce Hainley, and Susan Howe

VISIT STORE.RENAISSANCESOCIETY.ORG TO PURCHASE THESE AND OTHER RENAISSANCE SOCIETY TITLES.
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Members of the Renaissance Society share our commitment to art as an essential way to illuminate and address key questions of our times. Your generosity enables us to undertake ambitious projects.

Join us: renaissancesociety.org/support.

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-20% discount on publications
-Invitation to annual members event
-Renaissance Society tote bag
-Recognition in our Annual Report

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from $300/year
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-10% discount on most Renaissance Society editions
-Plus all Friend benefits

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
$2,500/year

CHICAGO COMMITTEE
$1,000/year
($500 for those 35 and under)
-Invitations to special Chicago Committee events
-Invitations to the Renaissance Society’s annual meeting and dinner
-Plus all Book Club benefits

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Major support for the Renaissance Society’s Next Century Fund for the production of new work is generously provided by:

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VISITING INFORMATION

All exhibitions and events take place at the Renaissance Society unless otherwise noted.

All are free, open to the public, and require no booking.

For more information please visit our website or follow us on social media.

Twitter and Instagram: @RenSoc

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Opening hours
Tue–Fri: 10am–5pm
Sat and Sun: 12–5pm
Closed Mondays and between exhibitions

Group visits
We are pleased to accommodate visits from schools, universities, and other groups, and our library and archives are open to researchers by appointment. Please contact us to arrange a visit.

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