

Art Will Be All Around Us at CounterCurrent17

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2017 AT 7 A.M.

BY SUSIE T



Remote Houston, part of CounterCurrent16, was presented by Alley Theatre and the University of Houston Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts. Photo by XPANDER

We're still talking about last year's *Remote Houston*, when the Berlin-based artists' collective Rimini Protokoll asked us to meet in a spooky cemetery, listen to the voice in the headphones and explore "what happens with our knowledge and experiences after we die." It was all part of the outside-the-box thinking during CounterCurrent16, the multidisciplinary festival presented by the University of Houston's Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts. Alley Theatre coproduced *Remote Houston* and continued the "collective hive" tours even after the festival ended. Running from April 18-23, this year's [CounterCurrent17](#) looks just as fascinating, if also a tad hard to define. But that's OK. We like coloring outside the lines, playing in multiple sandboxes, and exploring performance art that's cutting-edge, creative and, well, different.

[Simulacrum, by winter guests](#) (dance, theater)

The MATCH

7 p.m. April 18-20, free

Explore what happens when the Argentinian-born Daniel Proietto, trained in kabuki, pairs up with the 76-year-old Shoji Kojima, who moved to Spain from Japan to become a master of flamenco. Breathtaking. **Insider tip:** The opening night celebration begins at 6 p.m. April 18.

<http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/preview-countercurrent17-to-deliver-cutting-edge-art-to-houston-audiences-april-18-23-2017-9311677/2>



Follow the story of three Syrian refugees who fled the war and sought refuge in Germany during this video installation, *Stories of Refuge*, by the Dictaphone Group. Photo courtesy of Tania El Khoury

[*Stories of Refuge*, by Dictaphone Group](#) (video installation)

The MATCH

Noon to 8 p.m. April 18-23, free

Don't expect luxury recliners for this one. The organizers are asking that you take off your shoes and lie down in a bunk bed to view and listen to these films created on the sly by real-life Syrian refugees. **Insider tip:** The opening-night celebration begins at 6 p.m. April 18.

[*Camp Pause*, by Dictaphone Group](#) (video installation)

The Brandon on Brasil

Noon to 8 p.m., April 18-23, free

Enough is enough, and it's time to start building bridges between Houston's Muslim and non-Muslim residents. For this video installation, four residents of a refugee camp in Lebanon led a film crew through their everyday routes from home to the sea. The videos are projected onto the walls of the gallery and audience members are invited to pick up the headphones to listen to one of the narratives. **Insider tip:** The opening reception runs from 7 to 9 p.m. April 21.



Put on your walking shoes and get ready to discover 50 instances of this site-specific installation, *The Miraculous: Houston*, at the University of Houston main campus. Photo courtesy of Heather Bause

[*The Miraculous: Houston*, by Raphael Rubinstein + Heather Bause](#) (public art installation)

University of Houston, Entrance 16, off Cullen

All hours, April 18-23, free

While we're all still mourning the loss of the popular white-tailed squirrel that called UH home base, let's honor her memory and start hunting for all 50 instances of this site-specific installation inspired by Raphael Rubinstein's book, *The Miraculous*. Site location maps are available at all CounterCurrent festival venues. Insider tip: The opening reception will be held during UH Public Art Day, noon to 3 p.m. April 22, in the courtyard of the Fine Arts Building.



In Ten Tiny Dances®, choreographers are challenged to perform on a small stage that's just four feet square. Come early at 7 p.m. for a reception sponsored by Saint Arnold Brewing Company. Photo by dabfoto creative

[Ten Tiny Dances®](#) (dance)

Post HTX

8 p.m. April 19, free

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Each year brings a different challenge for the choreographers and dancers who say "yes" to a stage that's just four feet square. This year it's being held at Post HTX, the old downtown post office, so there's plenty of room for standing and sitting. This year's dancers/choreographers are Charles O. Anderson, John Beasant III, Roxanne Claire, Erica Gionfriddo/ARCOS, Courtney D. Jones, Alisa Mittin, SpareWorks.dance (Amber Ortega-Perez + Charles Perez), Joshua L. Peugh/Dark Circles Contemporary Dance, Sixto Wagan and Connor Walsh. **Insider tip:** Saint Arnold Brewing Company is sponsoring the reception at 7 p.m. April 19.



Last year, we answered the question, "What's your Houston diversity problem?" Now hear what deep thinkers in India, Iran, Indonesia, Morocco, Gaza, Serbia and Germany are suggesting for our "first world" problems. *Photo by dabfoto creative*

[Ghana Think Tank](#) (activism art)

Time TBD, April 18-23, free

Traveling exhibit through Houston

We're just praying that we don't get mocked for this one. Last year we answered the question, "What's your Houston diversity problem?" and then the organizers asked think tanks around the world to come up with solutions. Let's hear what residents of a slum in Mumbai, a hacker collective out of Indonesia, rural artisans in Morocco and Syrian refugees had to offer up as solutions to our first world problems. It's a traveling installation, so visit the [CounterCurrent17 website](#) for updates on when and where to catch this fascinating project.

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Performance view, Kevin Beasley, *Movement II: BEATEN-FACE/TOMS/ARMS, TIES, & LEG/FLOOR/BODY/BASS*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2016. Photo by Leah Maghanoy/Courtesy of the artist and the Art Gallery of Ontario

[Movement V. Ballroom, by Kevin Beasley](#) (installation, performance)

The Historic Eldorado Ballroom

Noon to 8 p.m. April 18-23, free

Oh, yeah. The iconic and historic Eldorado Ballroom hosted many blues and jazz greats over the decades, and this time around the Third Ward venue features an installation and performance by visual artist Kevin Beasley. He's positioned 16 sculptural works throughout the space, that amplify sounds based on the movement of visitors, that in turn create light. It's a sight for the senses, and Beasley recommends visiting the space in advance before returning for his one-night-only performance at 8 p.m. April 22. **Insider tip:** The opening reception runs from 7 to 9 p.m. April 20.



Chicano performance artist-activist Harry Gamboa Jr. discusses the various creations he's directed throughout Los Angeles with his current performance troupe, Virtual Vérité, as well as earlier works, during this performance lecture. Shown: *The Sixth Expanse*, performed by Virtual Vérité. Photo courtesy of Harry Gamboa Jr.

[Illusions of Urbanscape, by Harry Gamboa Jr.](#) (performance lecture)

Quintero Theatre, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts

6:30 p.m. April 20, free

Chicano performance artist-activist, Harry Gamboa Jr. made Los Angeles his playground for <http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/preview-countercurrent17-to-deliver-cutting-edge-art-to-houston-audiences-april-18-23-2017-9311677/2>

more than 40 years, leading his merry performance troupe, Virtual Vérité, as well as earlier pioneers of Chicano artists to create subversively funny creations. The artist, writer and educator is dishing up the scoop on his "urbanscapes" during this one-night-only performance lecture. Guests will be able to sit during the lecture. **Insider tip:** The pre-lecture reception will be held beginning at 5 p.m. April 20 in the Blaffer Café.



The Catastrophic Theatre has already been presenting the world premiere of *Snow White*, by postmodern novelist and poet Donald Barthelme. Now they're dipping their toes into the waters of CounterCurrent17 to deliver up three nights of this theatrical adaptation. *Photo by George Hixson*

[*Snow White*, by The Catastrophic Theatre](#) (theater)

The MATCH

8 p.m. April 20-22, free

In this world-premiering adaptation, Snow White is anything but virginal, spending her days drinking screwdrivers and being bored while playing housewife to her seven roomies and dreaming of Prince Charming. Local fave Greg Dean takes the helm as director and *Snow White* is produced in association with the Barthelme Estate, Brazos Bookstore and Inprint, and features cast and crew from the UH School of Theatre and Dance. This one's not kid-friendly; there's plenty of adult content including sexual situations and language. Insider tip: Can't make it? Never fear, Catastrophic continues performances Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, through May 6 (pay what you can; suggested donation \$35).

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The Farm, by Suzanne Bocanegra. In this artist lecture Bocanegra examines the theatrical possibilities of a traditional artist slide presentation, using a trained actor (Lili Taylor) to deliver the lecture, accompanied by an animation of her text. Photo courtesy of Suzanne Bocanegra

[Farmhouse/Whorehouse, An artist lecture by Suzanne Bocanegra starring Lili](#)

[Taylor](#) (performance lecture)

The MATCH

7 p.m. April 21, free

3 and 7 p.m. April 22, free

Lili Taylor (*Mystic Pizza*, *Six Feet Under*, *The Conjuring*) is stepping up to the plate to perform Suzanne Bocanegra's newest lecture as Bocanegra, with the help of text, song, costume, film and projections. Apparently Bocanegra's grandparents had a small farm across from the Chicken Ranch in La Grange, and those early years observing both the farm and brothel have resulted in a story about the homesteading movement, hippie communes in the 1960s and the characterizations of prostitutes in art and theater. Audience members will be seated during these performances.



Each of the festival artists was asked to select a short film. Come view a screening of these films at this closing celebration. Shown: *Powers of Ten*. Photo courtesy of Eames Office LLC, eamesoffice.com

[Current Visions + Festival Closing Celebration](#) (film screening)

Aurora Picture Show

Noon, April 23, free

Aurora Picture Show co-presents this screening of shorts, each selected by a festival artist, to celebrate the festival's completion and to share concepts and spark new ideas. A reception follows.



Feed your soul instead of your stomach during these lunchtime lectures at The MATCH, April 19-22 Photo by *dabfoto creative*

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[Current Conversations: "How to introduce prosthesis for new thought patterns"](#) (discussion)

The MATCH

Noon, April 19, free

Curated and moderated by artist Carrie Schneider: "Infrastructure for Impossible Movement (How to support a new possible)." Panelists are Kevin Beasley, Dr. Jose Luis "Pepe" Contreras-Vidal, Alan Lucien Øyen and Dr. Cunjiang Yu. **Insider tip:** Bring your lunch into the gallery.

[Current Conversations: "How to platform the buried"](#) (discussion)

The MATCH

Noon, April 20, free

Curated and moderated by artist Carrie Schneider: "Representing the Unadmitted (How to platform the buried)." Panelists are Tania El Khoury, Carmen Montoya, Josephine Sorgwe and Chris Valdez. **Insider tip:** Bring your lunch into the gallery.

[Current Conversations: "How to find light in hostile environments"](#) (discussion)

The MATCH

Noon, April 21, free

Curated and moderated by artist Carrie Schneider: "Designing for Extremes (How to find light in hostile environments)." Panelists are Dr. Olga Bannova, Harry Gamboa Jr., Susan Rogers and Abir Saksouk. **Insider tip:** Bring your lunch into the gallery.

[Current Conversations: "How to turn a story inside out"](#) (discussion)

The MATCH

Noon, April 22, free

Curated and moderated by artist Carrie Schneider: "Retelling the Taken for Granted (How to turn a story inside out)." Panelists are Suzanne Bocanegra, Greg Dean, Dr. Erica Fletcher and Dr. Assata Richards. **Insider tip:** Bring your lunch into the gallery.

CounterCurrent17, a festival of performance, installation and ideas, runs April 18-23 at various locations throughout Houston. For more information, visit countercurrentfestival.org. All events are free, but space is limited.