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Peter Sellars Kicks Off Montalvo's Arts Initiative, *AGENCY: The Work of Artists*, with talk and film screening on March 6

Sellars to speak about *New Crowned Hope Festival* and film, *Opera Jawa* directed by Garin Nugroho

Forthcoming *AGENCY* Events:

March 13 – May 3: *In Possession of a Picture* by Julia Meltzer and David Thorne (visual arts), artist talk March 19
April 4: *A Perfect Day*; family event at Montalvo with performances by AXIS Dance Company and Joanna Haigood with Zaccho Dance Theatre

***AGENCY* artists:** AXIS Dance, Remy Charlip, Pandit Chitresh Das, Double G, Joanna Haigood with Zaccho Dance Theatre, Louis Hock, Jan Henle, Hirokazu Kosaka, Mingwei Lee, Ingram Marshall and Jim Bengston, Julia Meltzer and David Thorne, Connie Samaras, Allan Sekula, Peter Sellars, Adam Silverman and Nader Tehrani, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Wang Wei

Curated by Julie Lazar

SARATOGA, Calif. – Peter Sellars, renowned director of theater, opera, and festivals throughout the world, comes to Montalvo's Carriage House Theatre on March 6 at 7:00 p.m. to speak about the New Crowned Hope Festival he directed in Vienna in 2006. Sellars will also screen the film, *Opera Jawa*, directed by Garin Nugroho. This event marks the official start of [*AGENCY: The Work of Artists*](#), Montalvo's 2009 arts initiative, curated by Julie Lazar. Other forthcoming events for *AGENCY* are an installation in Montalvo's Project Space gallery, *In Possession of a Picture*, by Julia Meltzer and David Thorne, as well as the all-day family event *A Perfect Day*, based on the book with the same title by Remy Charlip.

Sellars is renowned worldwide for his innovative treatments of classical material from western and non-western traditions, and for his commitment to exploring difficult human challenges like terrorism, poverty, slavery, genocide and civil war and their aftermaths, and the role of the arts in contemporary society. Through films screened at Montalvo made by directors of seven different nationalities and commissioned for the 2006 New Crowned Hope Festival in Vienna, Sellars gives voice to artists living where "the need is to somehow turn the page of history, and where acts of mercy, imagination, and negotiation are the only hope."

The films from the New Crowned Hope series are shown every Tuesday from March 10 to April 14 at 7:30 p.m. The seven directors and their films are:

- March 10 - Garin Nugroho, (Indonesia), *Opera Jawa*
- March 17 - Bahman Ghobadi, (Kurdistan), *Half Moon*
- March 24 - Apichatpong Weerasethakul, (Thailand), *Syndromes and a Century*
- March 31 - Tsai Ming-Liang, (China), *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone*
- April 7 - Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, (West Africa), *Dry Season*
- April 14 - Paz Encina, (Paraguay), *Paraguayan Hammock*
- April 14 - Teboho Mahlatsi, (South Africa), *Meokgo and the Stickfighter*

“Peter’s diverse background and passion for working with artists whose talents might not otherwise be seen make him the ideal participant to officially open *AGENCY*,” said Lazar. “He understands the importance of examining interdependence through multiple artistic mediums and is able to do so from many viewpoints.”

AGENCY: The Work of Artists is a focused, thematic series of newly commissioned and existing art projects that explore the subject of interdependence – life’s dynamic, reciprocal interplay – from a variety of approaches including family, immigration, the environment, faith, cultural memory and economic globalism. More than 60 artists were invited to participate in *AGENCY* because of their sensitive, compassionate investigations into relationships among people, places and systems as well as their skillful production of engaging public art, film, sculpture, photography, literature, performance and architecture.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

***In Possession of a Picture* (2008), Julia Meltzer and David Thorne**

March 13 – May 3, Project Space at Montalvo

Free

In Possession of a Picture, by frequent collaborators Julia Meltzer and David Thorne, consists of a series of 50 photographic diptychs about incidents in which people have been stopped, questioned, detained or arrested for photographing particular sensitive sites in the United States (such as bridges, casinos, banks, landmarks, tourist attractions, etc.), or in which people were detained for other reasons and subsequently found to be in possession of videotapes or photographs of these same sites.

The images in question are not publicly available nor do the artists have access to them; they only have knowledge of where the incidents took place. Each diptych refers to a particular occurrence. The site itself – examples include Disneyland, downtown Atlanta, and the J.P. Morgan Chase building in Dallas – is represented by an image selected from the millions of available pictures circulating on the Internet. The unavailable image – the picture that someone was found to be in possession of – is represented by a vacant rectangle with a simple black border that defines a space into which audiences can project anything.

This World, Then Another: A Screening and Conversation between Julia Meltzer, David Thorne and Saba

Mahmood

March 19, 6:30 – 9:30, Project Space and Carriage House

Price: TBD

In addition to their installation in the Project Space, Meltzer and Thorne’s award-winning film, *We Will Live to See These Things* (2009), which was shot over a tumultuous two-year residence in Damascus, is screened in the Carriage House followed by a public conversation with the artists. The conversation includes a response by Saba Mahmood, author of *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005), and associate professor of social cultural anthropology at UC Berkeley. Reception to follow.

A Perfect Day

April 4, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., Montalvo grounds

\$5/person; \$20/car (\$35/car after March 25)

Inspired by painter, dancer, choreographer, theater director and children’s book author/illustrator Remy Charlip’s most recent picture book, *A Perfect Day* (published by Greenwillow Books), families of all stripes are invited for a celebration mirroring “a perfect day’s” activities lovingly depicted in watercolor paintings on the pages of his colorful book. The festivities include watercolor painting, storytelling, hiking and picnicking as well as workshops on how to make a dance and how to make a book. See presentations of Charlip’s inventive Airmail and Household dances performed by AXIS Dance Company and Joanna Haigood’s Zaccho Dance Theatre. In a rare

appearance, Remy Charlip will be present to sign copies of his books. In-kind sponsorship by San Jose, Calif.-based Hicklebee's Childrens Books.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

AXIS DANCE COMPANY

AXIS Dance Company is an ensemble of dancers and choreographers, both with and without disabilities, who work under the direction of dancer and choreographer, Judith Smith. As part of *A Perfect Day* that celebrates the dance, theater and book artistry of Remy Charlip (see Charlip below), members of AXIS Dance Company perform a series of his Household and Airmail dances along with dancer/choreographer, Joanna Haigood and members of her Zaccho Dance Theatre (see Haigood below).

REMY CHARLIP

Inspired by painter, dancer, choreographer, theater director and children's book author/illustrator Remy Charlip's most recent picture book, *A Perfect Day* (published by Greenwillow Books), families of all stripes are invited for a celebration mirroring "a perfect day's" activities lovingly depicted in watercolor paintings on the pages of his colorful book. The festivities include watercolor painting, storytelling, hiking and picnicking as well as workshops on how to make a dance and how to make a book. See presentations of Charlip's inventive Airmail and Household dances performed by AXIS Dance Company and Joanna Haigood's Zaccho Dance Theatre. In a rare appearance, Remy Charlip will be present to sign copies of his books.

PANDIT DAS

Pandit Das is a master of classical North Indian Kathak dance, a choreographer and artistic director of performing arts schools in the U.S. and India. Pandit Das leads on-going, free Kathak dance classes for children of India's red light district. As part of *AGENCY*, the Chhandam Youth Company, a group of professionally trained youth dances, who have trained under Kathak master and *AGENCY* artist Pandit Chitresh Das, will perform in Montalvo's Carriage House Theatre. Pandit Das will return to Montalvo in the fall to lead an open rehearsal and Master Class. His performing arts company will also present an evening's length concert of dance in the Carriage House Theatre.

GEOFF GALLEGOS

Geoff Gallegos, also known as Double G, is a producer, musician, composer, conductor, music teacher and co-founder of DaKah, a 70-piece hip hop orchestra-. As a Lucas Artists Program fellow, Double G is composing two commissioned contemporary classical string quartets (from a series underway), one dedicated to the theme of interdependence. He presents an evening of original Gallegos compositions performed by LA's Sonus Quartet in the Main Hall at Villa Montalvo.

JOANNA HAIGOOD/ ZACCHO DANCE THEATRE

Joanna Haigood is a dancer and choreographer who directs her own adult and children's dance company. Haigood is a Lucas Artists Program fellow who has collaborated with and performed Remy Charlip's solo dances over the years. Her youth company branch of Zaccho Dance Theatre perform a selection of Charlip's "Household" and "Airmail Dances," and she performs "Dance in a Doorway," "Dance in a Bed," undertakes a new rendition of Remy Charlip's classic, "Garden Lilacs" during a day-long family celebration at Montalvo, *A Perfect Day*.

JAN HENLE

Jan Henle is a sculptor who lives and works in Manhattan and Maricao in the mountains of southwestern Puerto Rico. *Con el Mismo Amor (With the Same Love)* 1999-2007, is a display of exquisite film drawings and photographs that documents the development of a living sculpture that is presented in the Project Space with a related film which screens in the Carriage House. The focus of the images is on the experience of bringing a sculpture into being, demonstrating an attempt to live in harmony with nature, while drawing strength from an inner state of emptiness and clarity.

LOUIS HOCK

Louis Hock is a filmmaker, video-, installation-, public- and visual artist, and a professor at UC Irvine. Drawing on his experiences living near the border of the U.S. and Mexico, his artworks often address the cultural clashes and exchange taking place on both sides of the border. Presentations of his award-winning video documentary series, *The Mexican Tapes: A Chronicle of Life Outside the Law*, are complemented by premiere screenings of *The American Tapes* in which Hock revisits the stories of the three families he recorded 25 years earlier, and are shown together in the Billiards Room of the Villa. For Hock's public conversation, the artist invites first and second generation immigrants to address their expectations and civic evolution through the passage of time and circumstances in the U.S.

FERAL (2004), a large-scale video and sound installation depicting the Border Patrol's intimidating, random process of selecting those attempting to cross the U.S./Mexican border, will be installed in the Project Space.

HIROKAZU KOSAKA

Hirokazu Kosaka is a visual and performance artist, teacher, Artistic Director of the Japanese American Cultural Center in Los Angeles, Zen archer, and an ordained Buddhist priest. In collaboration with representatives of Silicon Valley's Japanese- and Vietnamese-American communities along with residents of the immediate neighborhoods of Montalvo, Kosaka invites elders to draw from memory the site of their childhoods as part of his shared project, *Ruin Map*. The artist transforms these sketches into 36" x 36" traditional engraved, woodblock prints on special handmade rice papers which are assembled in large flip books that are exhibited in public places visited or utilized by participants in the course of their daily lives (such as restaurants, libraries, banks, bars, churches and temples). Public conversations are an intrinsic component of *Ruin Map's* creation and a series of them takes place across the Valley. During the story telling and art making process, Kosaka creates a new performance piece in association with frequent collaborator, Butho dancer/choreographer, Oguri, along with contributions by master harmonica player, Tetsuya Nakamura in the Carriage House.

MINGWEI LEE

Mingwei Lee is a visual, performance, installation and public artist. As part of the *AGENCY* series, Lee joins frequent collaborator, architect Stephan Freid, in designing a proposal for a permanent public artwork called *Grandfather's Incline* (*working title*). If completed, this sculpture will be located at a parting between ancient oak and redwood trees along a popular trail within Montalvo's communal parklands.

A narrow, 40-foot long suspended wooden platform extends beyond the hillside at a slight incline hovering above the nearby Garden Theater and historic Villa. A single potted tree is situated at the far end of the platform providing a shady, contemplative space for hikers to rest, refresh themselves and to experience a unique view of Silicon Valley. An exhibition of working drawings, model for *Grandfather's Incline*, topographic and elevation maps of the area as well as examples of past collaborations between Lee and Freid is scheduled for presentation in the Project Space, and both of the artists will join in a Public Conversation about engaging spaces within natural environments.

INGRAM MARSHALL with JIM BENGSTON

Ingram Marshall and Jim Bengston have worked together on two previous performance projects. Marshall is a contemporary classical composer of "live electronics," tape collages, extended vocals and acoustic instruments often scored in combination for solos, ensembles and orchestras, and he teaches composition at Yale University. Bengston is a well-respected landscape photographer. In this commissioned work, local artists assist Marshall with digitizing a projection sequence that synchronizes Bengston's exquisite photographs of Northern California with an electro-acoustic composition, *Alcatraz*, which was inspired by the famous Bay Area prison. Four additional compositions for string quartet or piano will be performed in Montalvo's Carriage House: *Fog Tropes*, *Evensongs part 1*, *Eberbach* (with projected images), and *Evensongs part 2*. Their public conversation will explore themes of isolation in contemporary cultures from different international perspectives and touch upon the impact of prison life in the United States.

JULIA MELTZER & DAVID THORNE

Julia Meltzer and David Thorne enjoy an on-going collaboration as artists. Meltzer is media artist and director of

Clearwater Studios, a non-profit organization in Los Angeles. Thorne is a writer and interdisciplinary artist. Meltzer and Thorne present a two-part program: the first is an installation titled *In Possession of a Picture*. It incorporates a series of 50 photographic diptychs in which people have been stopped, questioned, detained or arrested for photographing particular sensitive sites in the United States (such as bridges, casinos, banks, landmarks, tourist attractions, etc.), or in which people were detained for other reasons and subsequently found to be in possession of videotapes or photographs.

The second part of Meltzer and Thorne's program includes their award-winning film, *We Live to See These Things* (2007), shot over a two-year residence in Damascus, which will be screened in the Carriage House followed by a Public Conversation with the artists and a response by Saba Mahmood, author of *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005), and Associate Professor of Social cultural Anthropology at UC Berkeley.

CONNIE SAMARAS

Connie Samaras is a conceptual photographer, writer, and UC Irvine professor. Her artworks often explore psychological dislocation and intersections between science, politics, fiction and mundane reality. Selections from Samaras' recent colorful, lush photographic series and videos are displayed in the Project Space including works from *Angelic States—Event Sequence* which examines the techno-landscaping of U.S. urban spaces in Los Angeles, New York and Las Vegas and, *V.A.L.I.S.* (vast active living intelligence system), a National Science Foundation sponsored series of pictures that depict liminal spaces between life support architecture and the extreme environment of the South Pole, Antarctica. Samaras also premieres a new body of work, *After the American Century*, that combines photography and a video installation shot this winter in The United Arab Emirates cities of Dubai, Dubai Islands, and Jebel Ali. Inspired by science fiction and speculative literature, this project unpacks the ever-shifting cultural narratives of global hyper-capitalism, trans-nationalism, and the future imaginary.

In July, two film screenings and conversations in the Carriage House are planned among Connie Samaras, Kavita Philip, (Associate Professor, UC Irvine, Women's Studies and Director of the Critical Studies Institute) and Ward Smith (Librarian Southern California Library and web master/author, www.leveler.org) that engages audience members. They examine speculative fiction cinema and literature in relation to science and economy, character construction, and the ability to imagine the future as a series of possibilities rather than a singular probability.

ALLAN SEKULA

Allan Sekula is a conceptual photographer, writer, filmmaker and faculty member at California Institute of the Arts.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens commissioned Allan Sekula to create *Edit Nine*, an outdoor installation in conjunction with its 2008 exhibition, *This Side of Paradise*. He describes the project as a "prose poem in pictures," a meditation on the last two decades of the life of Los Angeles. The provocative sequence of more than 20 outdoor, large-scale photographs is dedicated to the memory of writer and labor activist Louis Adamic, who emigrated from Slovenia to the United States during World War I and is perhaps best known for his autobiography *Laughing in the Jungle* (1932). The book is a scathing depiction of 1920s Los Angeles and its many excesses. For *AGENCY*, Sekula adds two photographs specifically chosen for the grounds of the Montalvo Arts Center. As visitors wander around the Center's gardens and park pathways, the meaning of the pictures gradually reveal themselves.

PETER SELLARS

Peter Sellars directs opera, theater and arts festivals internationally, and is professor of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA. As a new commission for Montalvo, Sellars gives the keynote address, *Art in the Age of Obama*, on behalf of Montalvo Art Center's 2009 Arts Initiative, *AGENCY: The Work of Artists*. He is renowned worldwide for his innovative treatments of classical material from western and non-western traditions, and for his commitment to exploring difficult human challenges like terrorism, poverty, slavery, genocide and civil war and their aftermaths, and the role of the arts in contemporary society. Through films screened at Montalvo made by directors of seven different nationalities and commissioned for the 2006 New Crowned Hope Festival in Vienna, Sellars gives voice to

artists living where "the need is to somehow turn the page of history, and where acts of mercy, imagination, and negotiation are the only hope."¹

ADAM SILVERMAN & NADER TEHRANI – *Boolean Valley* at Montalvo now through March 8

Adam Silverman and Nader Tehrani met while pursuing their Bachelor of Architecture degrees at Rhode Island School of Design. Silverman, Studio Director for Heath Ceramics, is an artist and potter who opened his own studio, Atwater Pottery, in 2003 and exhibits in the U.S and Asia. Tehrani is co-principal architect of Boston-based Office dA, and is an Associate Professor of Architecture at MIT. *Boolean Valley* (2008) is a room-sized installation comprised of 400 clay objects glazed in a striking compound of cobalt blue, black and silicon carbide. Together the pieces form a sloping sculptural landscape derived from the principle of Boolean logic, which calibrates the geometry of intersecting objects. Cast from a single mold, each clay piece is intersected with a variable slice, cut in two and redistributed over the gallery floor to produce the topography of a landscape. Silverman and Tehrani's collaborative project premiered at the San José Museum of Art and has since been re-sited at Montalvo's Project Space, after which the artwork moves to Los Angeles for exhibition at The Museum of Contemporary Art's Pacific Design Center gallery from March 22 through July 8. This piece was commissioned for *AGENCY*.

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES

Mierle Laderman Ukeles is a sculptor, public and performance artist, and senior critic in sculpture at Yale University. A new commission for Montalvo, *O OAK OH!* (working title), begins to address the health of Montalvo's land and to focus on the sudden death of its local ancient oak trees. A public Day of Gathering/Learn-In will be organized in July on Montalvo's front lawn bringing together scholars, spiritual leaders, experts and leaders to share their learning on both the perils of Sudden Oak Death and the ancient spiritual majesty of the oak. Ukeles' project will conclude in October 2009 with the installation of a video artwork projection and a second public conversation and performance.

WANG WEI

Wang Wei is an accomplished musician and composer whose training includes traditional Chinese and Western classical music as well as classical contemporary, pop, Latin, folk, world and African traditions. He plays piano and a variety of percussion instruments, and leads the Melody of China ensemble blending ancient cultural traditions with current sounds drawn from youthful, American culture. Wei (who collaborated with composer Tan Dan on his score for the movie, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) conducts and performs with his ensemble at Montalvo's Carriage House, preceded by a public master class.

JULIE LAZAR, CURATOR

Julie Lazar is an independent curator and director of ICAN (International Contemporary Arts Network) based in Los Angeles, Calif. In 1982, she became a founding curator of The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles where she later served as Director of Experimental Programs until 2000. Since then, she has curated exhibitions that have toured internationally, has organized complex arts programs, and consulted with clients such as KCET public television, the Getty Museum, American Film Institute, MOCA, Santa Monica Museum of Art, and the cities of San Jose, Seattle and Los Angeles. Prior to 1982, Lazar held key positions at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, The Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller University, The Hudson River Museum, and PS 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York.

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For more information visit www.montalvoarts.org/agency

About Montalvo Arts Center

¹ Peter Sellars, "Welcome," *New Crowned Hope*, ed. Herausgeber, (Vienna, 2006), p. 13

Montalvo Arts Center is a member-supported, nonprofit organization dedicated to capturing the innovative and diverse spirit of Silicon Valley and engaging people in contemporary concerns through the arts. Located in Silicon Valley's Saratoga hills, Montalvo Arts Center rests on 175 stunning acres, including the Sally and Don Lucas Artist Programs, an international artist residency; a historic Mediterranean villa, two theatres, a gallery and 2.5 miles of hiking trails. Senator James Phelan left the historic villa and grounds to the people of California in 1930 for the encouragement of art, music, literature and architecture.

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