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School of the Museum
of Fine Arts Boston



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The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Presents
"Raqs Media Collective: Luminous Will" September 17–October 17, 2015

Featuring eight works exploring themes of time and our existence within it, including the debut of four new pieces

Boston, MA (August 13, 2015)—The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA) is proud to bring the work of New Delhi-based Raqs Media Collective to Boston in "**Luminous Will**," on view September 17–October 17, 2015. With an opening reception on Thursday, September 17, 5–7 pm, "Luminous Will" offers a focused meditation on what the cycles of life and death can mean in the context of the passage of time. Through their works, the artists articulate rarely asked questions, consider infinity, and re-animate historical memory—transforming the SMFA's Anderson Auditorium and Grossman Gallery into a habitat for thoughtfulness, affect, and the elaboration of a playful sense of plenitude.

"Luminous Will" refers to an eponymous work by Raqs, where hands of the clock index words that become phrases, reaching beyond the typical boundaries of art to create objects, projects, and products that address themes of time and our existence within it. The question of what is or can be a 'luminous will'—an illuminated, iridescent desire for life itself—is central to the constellation of works that constitute the exhibition at SMFA.

On view in Anderson Auditorium, **Re-run** (2013), is a large-scale video work based on Henri Cartier-Bresson's photograph of a December 1948 bank run in Shanghai that features a crowd of people desperate to get their money in order to buy gold in anticipation of an imminent collapse of their currency. Resonating with current geo-political conditions, the work revisits and re-stages Cartier-Bresson's photograph, entertaining the idea that the anticipation of a financial collapse ultimately contributes to and causes said collapse.

Located in the Grossman Gallery, and one of several works created for the exhibition, **Lost in Search of Time** (2015) is a textual intaglio panel consisting of an arrangement of five words: IN, SEARCH, OF, LOST, and TIME. The panel illuminates each word in an alternating pattern suggesting two phrases with different (but related) meanings: "Lost in search of time" and "In search of lost time," which point to the peculiarities and slippages that happen whenever time gets lost, or is found, in dreams and shared memories. **Seven Billion and One** (2015) features 101 screen prints of a lemniscate—the sign of infinity—illustrating how individuals are simultaneously the seven billion, and the one. The piece encourages viewers to contemplate on their own place within the exhibition, as well as the larger universe.

"Raqs is not constrained by the rules of what traditionally defines art, they simply work to create meaningful and culturally powerful pieces and projects," says SMFA President, Chris Bratton. "Their methodology is wonderfully aligned with SMFA's mission, built upon independent thought and interdisciplinary pursuits. We are thrilled to present this opportunity and for SMFA and the greater Boston community to experience Raqs' extraordinary work on an intimate level."

In addition to the exhibition, a series of public events have been scheduled with the artists. Raqs will participate alongside Ultra-red, a sound art collective, during SMFA's 2015 Graduate Colloquium, "For Giving Time," to discuss reinterpretations of history, experiences of simultaneous temporalities, transnational ancestralities, and other questions regarding self and collective. The event will take place on Wednesday, September 16, 6:30–9 pm Remis Auditorium at the MFA. On Friday, September 18 at 6:30 pm in Anderson Auditorium, "Lived Histories and the After-Life of Images" will feature Raqs;

Professor Homi Bhabha, the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of English and American Literature and Language and the Director of the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University; and Abhishek Kaicker, Assistant Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley, and Junior Fellow, Society of Fellows, Harvard University, in a conversation about human lives and the life of images. The event will be hosted in collaboration with the Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University.

The exhibition is made possible in part through the generosity of Sandy Moose and Eric Birch. Special thanks to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Artist-in-Residency Program.

“Raqs Media Collective: Luminous Will”

September 17–October 17, 2015

Mrs. E. Ross Anderson Auditorium + Barbara and Steven Grossman Gallery

School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

230 The Fenway, Boston MA 02115

www.smfa.edu/raqs

Exhibition hours: Monday–Saturday, 10 am–5 pm; Thursday, 10 am–8 pm; closed Sundays and holidays. Admission to the exhibition and related events is free.

About the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:

Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is one of only two art schools in the country affiliated with a major museum—the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our mission is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate artists—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. While the School’s mission is constant, its practice is always transforming. For more information about our programs and partnerships, visit www.smfa.edu.

About the Raqs Media Collective:

Founded in 1992 by Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta, the Raqs Media Collective enjoys playing a plurality of roles, often appearing as artists, occasionally as curators, sometimes as philosophical agent provocateurs. They make contemporary art, have made films, curated exhibitions, edited books, staged events, collaborated with architects, computer programmers, writers, and theatre directors, and have founded processes that have left deep impacts on contemporary culture in India. Raqs (pronounced Rux) follows its self-declared imperative of 'kinetic contemplation' to produce a trajectory that is restless in terms of the forms and methods that it deploys, even as it achieves a consistency of speculative procedures. The members of Raqs live and work in Delhi, where they co-founded Sarai at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in 2000. Exhibitions curated by them include INSERT2014 (New Delhi, 2014) and Manifesta 7 (Bolzano, 2008). They are currently exhibiting as part of the 56th Venice Biennale in “All The World’s Futures.” Recent exhibitions include solo shows at the the National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi (2014-2015); the Chronus Art Center, Shanghai (2014); Centro de Arte dos de Mayos, Madrid (2014) and MUAC, Mexico City (2015).

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