

Thu, Dec 15,  
2016, 7:30pm  
**Eat Rice Yet?**

VIVO Media Arts presents

**thirstDays**

No. 11

*Love, intimacy and  
(com)passion in a  
geopolitical context*

Curated by Henry Tsang  
+ Diyan Achjadi

Featuring Fred Wah,  
Meeru Dhalwala,  
Vanessa Richards +  
Anna Baignoche

Video by  
Michael Rakowitz,  
Chee Wang Ng 吳子雲

# thirstDays

## No. 11

### *Love, intimacy and (com)passion in a geopolitical context*

A monthly series of video, film, performance and ceremony events

Project curator/artist-in-residence Jayce Salloum

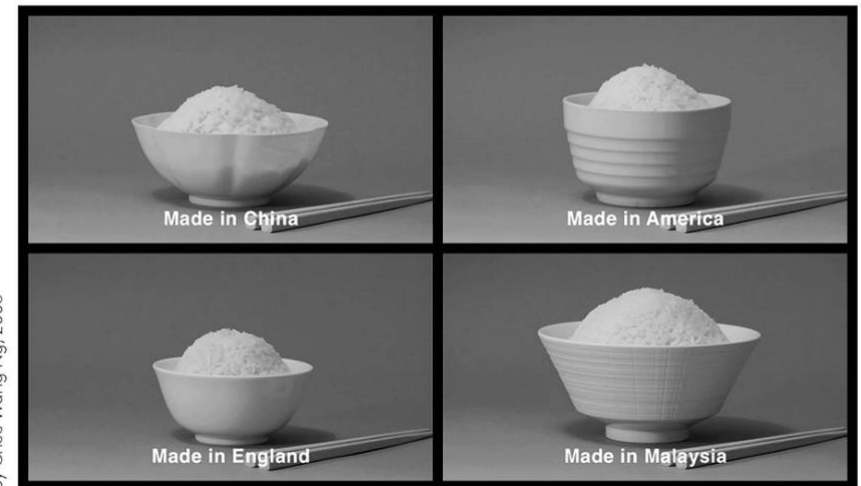
*thirstDays is a project conceived as the rain falls and covers us in a slick substance transduced from the skies, moist. How can this, how can we, contribute to the establishing of a momentum that may have once been here in waves or pieces but over time was squandered, and defeated, with the imposition of capital triumphantly declaring its colonial (un)consciousness in our enclave by the water. Surrounded by a possible serene beauty, grief and sadness, love and hate, what encounters do we inscribe into our psyches and into our beings, what can art do to fulfil a mandate of hope and agency. What can we contribute.*

*The project takes inspiration from the patterns of existence to look at the mechanisms which we are part of, and relate them to all we end up being, sharing, denying, repressing and preserving. We seek that which compels us: love, intimacy and (com)passion, explorations of the commons/(un)commons; empathy and subjectivities; nourishing sites and situations; modes of agency; and subjectivities of place. We insist on diversity and threads of collaboration, strands of “collectivity”/affinity, emphasizing works that have a specificity of location with resonances/meanings for others within reach and beyond. There is a socio-psycho imperative here at this site – Vancouver – grounded in what is missing and manoeuvring the gaps while referencing the historic in the present(ness) – and of the moment – with the critical reimagining of the repressed and the projection of empathy and action. – Jayce Salloum*

## Eat Rice Yet?

Gathering around food offers the potential of a communal experience, providing a physical bridge towards building real, corporeal community. Shared experiences create space for conversation that allows for both a sense of mutual understanding as well as an articulation of differences. Our program of words, music and food will address the struggle towards generosity and openness in an attempt to provide different ways of nourishment.

Our title, *Eat Rice Yet?*, is the ubiquitous, pedestrian way of greeting one another in Chinese culture. One asks *how you are* by inquiring whether you are hungry, whether you have been fed; because if you have not, then we need to be concerned. That rice represents food is emblematic of its role in Chinese cuisine, culture and identity, as it is with over half of the world's population that considers this ancient grain their staple, their visceral base, their place of comfort and satisfaction.



Video still from 108 Global Rice Bowl  
by Chee Wang Ng, 2008

Over 2.5 billion people live in rice-based societies, many of them in Asia. There are ongoing tensions between increasing population density impacting the access to arable land, as well as the ramifications of contemporary rice cultivation on the environment. Rice requires incredibly heavy water usage: approximately 5000 liters of water are needed to produce a single kilogram of rice. The current and ongoing rhetoric of food security has resulted in major shifts towards genetically modified rice and industrial farming over heirloom grains and traditional cultivation methods. For this evening, we are using rice as a metaphor as a way to consider our relationships with each other, and our relationship to the land.

– Henry Tsang + Diyan Achjadi

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\* Statistics from <http://www.asiarice.org/>

For the final **thirstDays no.12** (January 26), we present sound, performance and video works that consider intimacy across species, objects, and elements. We insist on slow and concentrated modes of listening that disrupt capitalist-driven divisions of entities in nature and culture. Furthering Henry Tsang and Diyan Achjadi's metaphorical use of rice, our program asks: "Can we as humans hear the stories of the plants; the stories told by spirits in the land; the sound of the atmosphere and the sounds calling from the ice?" (Britt Kramvig and Margrethe Pettersen, *Living Land — Below as Above*)

– Elisa Ferrari + Stacey Ho

## Program

Henry Tsang + Diyan Achjadi  
Introduction



Michael Rakowitz

Dar Al Sulh  
(Domain of Conciliation)

11:42, video, in collaboration with  
Regine Basha + Ella Shohat, 2013

*Dar Al Sulh* is a territory where an agreement between Muslims and non-Muslims has been made and provides freedom of religion, autonomy, and protection. *Dar Al Sulh* (Domain of Conciliation) was a restaurant that operated from May 1-7, 2013 in Dubai, and was the first in the Arab World to serve the cuisine of Iraqi Jews since their exodus, which began in the 1940s. Jews were once Arabs, too. Their exodus from Arab lands is one that has been propagandized and mythologized by Israel, by the flawed narrative of Zionism, and by other entities in order to bolster specific cultural and political positions. *Dar Al Sulh* seeks to be a time machine, to reactivate a space when there was harmony, when Jews had not yet abandoned their Arab selves, before Jewish populations in the Arab world were assumed to be complicit with Zionism. The notion of conciliation is the central philosophy of *Dar Al Sulh*, meant to be reflected in the food and the conversations spoken around it.



*Meeru Dhalwala*  
**A Grain of Rice, a Pot of Rice**  
15:00, talk

There is beauty in one and in many, but it takes practice and thoughtfulness. Whether we are cooking a pot of Basmati rice or eating the rice with others, what are our practices and thoughts – not just from the nourishment of taste and hunger but from our prejudices and acceptance. How did a group of Orthodox Christian, non-English speaking women connect with a group of Orthodox Hindu and Sikh, non-English speaking women? Over sharing Basmati rice pilaf and their thoughts on what it would mean to marry a Muslim.

**First Intermission**

10:00  
Sake, horchata + genmaicha served



*Chee Wang Ng 吳子雲*  
**108 Global Rice Bowl**  
壹佰零捌個全球化飯碗  
5:24, video, videographer Bob Geile, 2008

The vernacular Chinese greeting “Eaten Your Fill of Rice?” 食飽飯未呀? is similar to “How are you?” or “What’s up?” thus – What is Chinese? What is being Chinese? What is Chinese identity in today’s global society? Each clang corresponds to each of the 108 bowls, like a bell it pierces through emptiness of phenomena and enlightens the mind into awareness. 108 is the number of beads in a Buddhist rosary, a complete cycle of a prayer. Chinese diasporic diverse voices sing across the globe.

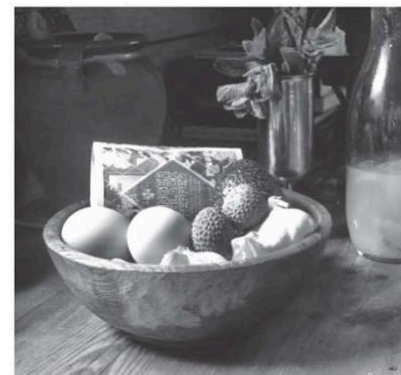


*Fred Wah*  
**Rickey Dancing**  
15:00, reading

This talk is collated around some of the poetry and prose I have written in locating food and memory as central to the dynamics of my own hyphenated identity. I will combine readings from my book about growing up in a Chinese-Canadian restaurant, *Diamond Grill*, with other more recent writing.

**Second Intermission**

10:00  
Drink more



*Vanessa Richards with Anna Baignoche*  
**A Dark Welcome Table: Songs for Grace in Action**  
15:00, performance

You are here  
We are together  
Outside is dark  
There is hunger  
Nothing else needs doing  
Everything is ready  
We sit  
We stand  
The Dark Welcome Table  
Songs for Grace in Action

**Welcome Table**  
Rice dishes will be served

## Curators

**Diyana Achjadi** was born in Jakarta, Indonesia to a West-Javanese father and English-Canadian mother. Her work examines historical prints and surface ornamentation, tracing narratives of cross-cultural imaginings, influences and contaminations, retranslating and reinterpreting them through drawing, printmaking and animation. Diyan is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr University of Art & Design.

**Henry Tsang** is a visual and media artist and occasional curator based in Vancouver. His artworks incorporate digital media, video, photography, language and sculptural elements that follow the relationship between the public, community and identity through global flows of people, culture and capital. Projects include *Maraya*, an eight-year collaboration that investigates the reappearance of Vancouver's False Creek in Dubai as the Dubai Marina; *Orange County*, and *Olympus*, shot in California, Beijing, Torino and Vancouver, exploring overlapping urban and socio-political spaces; and *Welcome to the Land of Light*, a public artwork along Vancouver's seawall that underscores Chinook Jargon, a 19th Century local trade language, and the English that replaced it. Henry is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr University of Art & Design.

## Featuring/works by

**Meeru Dhalwala** was born in India and moved from Washington, DC to Vancouver in 1995 and has since been cooking and running the kitchens at Rangoli and Vij's, which has been hailed by the New York Times as "easily among the finest Indian restaurants in the world." She has a Masters in Development Studies and has worked with various international non-profit organizations on human rights and economic development projects. An award-winning author of three Vij's cookbooks, Meeru sits on the board of Vancouver Farmers Markets and helps organize the annual international food fair, *Joy of Feeding*, in support of UBC Farm.

**Chee Wang Ng** 吳子雲 is a New York-based Chinese multidisciplinary artist from Malaysia who reevaluates, challenges, and recontextualizes ancient Chinese allegory, metaphor, and mythology in a fresh articulation of Chineseness. Ng earned his BFA in Architecture from Rhode Island School of Design, and had solo and group shows internationally and given lectures in colleges and universities across U.S. His latest focus has been his historically layered research based site-specific installations and large-scale photography tableau series but his most requested work still is his video for its poetic self-reflection on identity and humanity only second to his "September 11th Memorial Installation: *Red, White, Blue*."

**Michael Rakowitz** is an Iraqi-American artist who operates within art spaces and beyond, creating projects that often expose and challenge U.S. - Middle Eastern cultural and political relations. He is Professor in the Department of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University, Chicago, and has exhibited at PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York; 16th Sydney Biennial, Australia; Tate Modern, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; dOCUMENTA(13) and the Museum of Contemporary Art-Chicago. He is represented in Chicago by Rhona Hoffman Gallery.

**Vanessa Richards** has a social arts practice that explores what life becomes when we turn more often to each other than away. Community engaged initiatives have been devised with The Arts Club, Public Dreams, ECUAD, Capilano University, SFU and PHS (Portland Housing Society). In England her interdisciplinary work was presented with Tate Modern, ICA, Oval House Theatre and in collaboration with David Adjaye and dRMM deRijke Marsh Morgan Architects. Vanessa's poetry and critical works are anthologized in the UK, Holland, the United States and Canada. She is the founder and song leader for the *Woodward's Community Singers* and director of *Creative Together*, a song based facilitation process. Tonight she is accompanied by **Anna Baignoche**, teaching artist at Sarah McLachlan School of Music and song leader for *Local Vocals* with a new album dropping in Spring 2017.

**Fred Wah**, OC, was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan in 1939 but grew up in the Kootenays in southeast British Columbia. He has published since the early 1960s and is a former Parliamentary Poet Laureate. Recent books are *Diamond Grill*, a biofiction (1996), *Faking It: Poetics and Hybridity*, a collection of essays (2000), and two collections of poetry, *Sentenced to Light* (2008) and *is a door* (2009). In 2015, Talonbooks published *Scree: The Collected Earlier Poems, 1962-1991*.

Writer-in-residence **Tarah Hogue** is the 2016 Audain Aboriginal Curatorial Fellow with the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and Curator/Communications Director at grunt gallery in Vancouver. Tarah is Métis/French Canadian and of Dutch Canadian ancestry and identifies as an uninvited guest on the unceded Coast Salish territories of Vancouver BC where she has lived since 2008. Recent curatorial projects include *#callresponse*, a series of local art commissions centering Indigenous women and artists, accompanied by a touring exhibition with guest respondents at grunt gallery, co-organized with Maria Hupfield and Tania Willard; *Unsettled Sites*, a group show on haunting settler colonialism at SFU Gallery; and *Cutting Copper: Indigenous Resurgent Practice*, a collaboration between grunt gallery and the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery UBC, co-organizer Shelly Rosenblum.

Project curator/artist-in-residence **Jayce Salloum** tends to go only where he is invited or where there is an intrinsic affinity, his projects being rooted in an intimate engagement with place(s), and the people that inhabit them. A grandson of Syrian immigrants from the Bekaa Valley (Lebanon) he was born and raised on Sylix (Okanagan) territory in Kelowna, BC. His videotapes, photographs, installations, and other cultural projects engage the personal/subjective, reconfiguring notions of identity, community, history, boundaries, exile, (trans/inter/intra)nationalism and resistance. His work has involved production and facilitation in many locales including Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine, the former Yugoslavia, Central America, Mexico, New York, Berlin, Vienna, Vancouver, Aotearoa and Australia. He has exhibited at the widest range of local and international venues possible, from the smallest unnamed storefronts in his downtown eastside neighbourhood to institutions such as the Musée du Louvre, Museum of Modern Art, Centre Georges Pompidou, National Gallery of Canada, Bienal De La Havana, Sharjah Biennial, Biennale of Sydney and the Rotterdam International Film Festival. Salloum is a recipient of the 2014 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

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## Upcoming program curated by:

January 26/17:  
*Elisa Ferrari + Stacey Ho*

March 25/17:  
*Final gathering, potluck, party  
+ publication launch*

Past programs curated by  
*Tuy't'tanat Cease Wyss + Aaron Rice*  
*Ashok Mathur + Jeneen Frei Njootli*  
*Denise Ryner + Tonel*  
*Irwin Oostindie + Ronnie Dean Harris*  
*Phanuel Antwi + David Khang*  
*Urban Subjects (Sabine Bitter, Jeff Derksen,  
Helmut Weber)*  
*Ali Lohan + Cecily Nicholson*  
*Raymond Boisjoly + Jordan Wilson*  
*Tannis Nielsen + Jenny Fraser*  
*Cathy Busby + Dima Alansari*

Program Coordinator: *Elisa Ferrari*  
Technical Assistance:  
*Nikolai Gauer, Alex Muir*  
Videography: *Felix Oltean*  
Photography: *Brendan Yandt, Alisha Weng*  
Operations Coordinators:  
*Brit Bachmann, Lianne Zannier*  
Volunteers: *Michelle Martin, Sunny Nestler,  
Rebecca Klein, Masha Pilipenko,  
Elvira Parent, Paz Mascaro, Rachel Melanson,  
Vanessa Turner, Ainsleigh Spencer,  
Aditya Wibisono, Betty Ho,  
Rebecca Nichols, Daniesh Mann*  
Design: *The Future*

Writer in residence, *Tarah Hogue*, + guest  
writer, *Alexis Hogan (thirstDays No. 08)*,  
writing post event response essays at our  
blog: [thirstDays.vivomediaarts.com](http://thirstDays.vivomediaarts.com)

