

**Jaime Cortez** is a Bay Area writer, visual artist, and cultural worker. His art has been exhibited at venues throughout the Bay Area including the Berkeley Art Museum, Oakland Museum of California, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and Galería de la Raza. Over a dozen of his short stories have been published in anthologies. Jaime is currently working on his second graphic novel, which focuses on the impact of violence on a Northern California community.

**Taylor Greeson** is a filmmaker and producer living and working in Los Angeles, CA. His feature documentary *Meadowlark* has screened in various festivals and venues across the nation including the Outfest, NewFest and the Museum of Modern Art, and was nominated for a 2008 Gotham Independent Film Award.

**Jen Hofer** is a poet, translator, interpreter, teacher, knitter, and urban cyclist. Her recent and forthcoming poem sequences and translations are available through a range of autonomous small presses including: Atelos, Counterpath Press, Dusie Books, Kenning Editions, Palm Press, and Ponzipo. She currently teaches at Pomona College, at Goddard College, and in the MFA Writing Program at CalArts. She also makes small books by hand at her kitchen table in Cypress Park, Los Angeles.

**Nicole McJamerson Kearney** is not an artist. However, she wholeheartedly believes in feeding artists, as they are less likely to bite and scratch on a full stomach. She has spent several years on the care and feeding of a few particularly neglected artists, for the betterment of the community at large. "It is important to save the artists," she says, stroking a near feral-painter. "These rare and wonderful creatures enrich all our lives." She was raised in Northern Louisiana.

**Douglas Kearney** claims the above is bunk, arguing that Nicole McJamerson "Kearney" is using her bio to spread self-aggrandizing lies. "If she cares about artists," he says, "then I'm a Whiting Writers' Award-winning poet whose second collection, titled, perhaps, *The Black Automaton*, was selected for the National Poetry Series by Catherine Wagner and will be available this fall through Fence Books!" He was raised in Altadena, CA. Douglas and Nicole would like to thank the curators, REDCAT, fellow neo-benshis and the audience.

**Lee Anne Schmitt** is a writer and director of essay films and performances, work that exists in the juncture between fiction and documentary. She has spent an uncomfortably large amount of her last five years in the wilderness of Southern Utah. She teaches in the Film and Video Program at the California Institute of the Arts.

**Erika Staiti** lives in North Oakland. Sometimes she's considered a "poet."

Filmmaker **Konrad Steiner** co-curates the kino21 film and performance series in San Francisco. From 2003 through 2006 he was a programmer at San Francisco Cinematheque, where he developed an interest in live cinema by producing neo-benshi shows, as well as his own work with film and live music. His films and videos have screened at international festivals in Tokyo, London, Berlin, and New York, as well as in numerous above- and underground cinemas since 1981. He would like to thank anyone who was, is, or wants to try being a live film narrator, and the hackers who now make it possible.

#### UPCOMING FILM/VIDEO PROGRAMS

April 30–May 2: CalArts Film/Video Showcases

May 4: William E. Jones: Le Grand Mash Up

May 11: Cheryl Dunye: *The Watermelon Woman*

## THE CINEMA CABARET: LIVE FILM NARRATION

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April 29, 2009

8:30 pm

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CALARTS

REDCAT

# THE CINEMA CABARET: LIVE FILM NARRATION

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Co-curated by Jen Hofer and Konrad Steiner

Wednesday, April 29 | 8:30 p.m.

Supported by The School of Critical Studies and The School of Film/Video

*"This is the leading edge of a new art form... [with] an astonishing power in the duel between live performance and familiar sequence."* Claire Light, KQED (San Francisco)

## PROGRAM

***Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*** (1966)

by Mike Nichols

"You are cordially invited to George and Martha's for an evening of fun and games."

**Script: Konrad Steiner — Benshis: Konrad Steiner and Erika Staiti**

"Charles and Edward invite you to a mashup. BYOBitters!"

***Silsila*** (1981)

by Yash Chopra

"Love is faith... and faith is for ever".

**Script and Benshi: Neelanjana Banerjee**

*"Love is faith... and faith is for ever ...?"*

Especially when the Player's Ball is happening all day, e'ry day."

***The Shootist*** (1976)

by Don Siegel

"He's got to face a gunfight once more to live up to his legend

once more. To win just one more time."

**Script: Lee Anne Schmitt — Benshis: Lee Anne Schmitt and Taylor Greeson**

"Eventually, even an ox dies."

***Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*** (1967)

by Stanley Kramer

"A love story of today."

**Script and Benshi: Jaime Cortez**

"Choose white meat or dark, if you dare ..."

## INTERMISSION

***On The Beach*** (1959)

by Stanley Kramer

"We are all on that beach, on the thin line between life and death."

**Script and Benshi: Jen Hofer**

"There is still time... but what good is time if there are no people?"

***The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*** (1989)

by Peter Greenaway

"Lust ... Murder ... Dessert ... Bon Appetit!"

**Script and Benshi: Andrew Choate**

"Language ... Bodies ... Events ... Bon Appetit!"

***Fantasia*** (1940)

By Walt Disney

"Superb! Enthralling! Amazing! Walt Disney's Incomparable FANTASIA!"

**Script and Benshis: Nicole McJamerson and Douglas Kearney**

"Los Angeles' most riotous performance — FANTASIA!"

## PROGRAM NOTES

While the "neo" in *neo-benshi* suggests the invention of a new form with its foundation in the hundred-plus-year-old art of live narration to silent films, the fact is there have *always* been these kinds of artistic, entertaining, irreverent and critical responses to the movies. These responses are both homages and subversions, reconfigurations that navigate new terms for our relationship to the act of viewing, as writers and performers talk back to the movies. Some instances of the art have been pre-recorded, like the "Fractured Flickers" show produced by the creator of Rocky and Bullwinkle in the 1960s, or the Mystery Science Theater robots, while other instances have involved live shows such as Canadian Guy Madden's *Brand Upon The Brand* screenings from 2007, complete with live music, narrator and Foley artists. Since the last time the Cinema Cabaret appeared at REDCAT, full evening neo-benshi performances have taken place in San Francisco, Vancouver, New York City, Portland (Oregon), at other venues in Los Angeles, and on intermittent solo occasions all over the U.S.

Tonight's program brings back some artists from the last Cinema Cabaret at REDCAT and introduces others who are new to the form. The program also expands the format with more dual-speaker performances and increasingly complex interactions between the original movies and the revisionary performances. All seven pieces on the program are Los Angeles premieres, and four are brand new productions. Each writer has independently chosen their scenes and made their own edits. As befits the cabaret format, there is a wide variation in styles between performers, films and scripts: some scripts borrow text directly from the films, some appropriate text from other sources, and some are invented entirely from scratch. Some performances include sound and music effects, while others are strictly voiceover. Some clips remix the original film, while others are grounded in one integral scene. Though it is an odd coincidence that there happen to be two Stanley Kramer pictures on this bill, the range of films are extremely diverse, both visually and substantively, spanning five decades and shifting from Bollywood to Hollywood to Europe. We are also especially pleased to present in this particular theater a riotous re-reading of one of Walt Disney's most enduring works, perhaps the first neo-benshi performance to an animated feature.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Neelanjana Banerjee** is a writer and editor living in San Francisco. She received an MFA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University in 2007 and was a Hedgebrook fellow in 2008. Since 2003, she has helped young people tell their own stories at *YO! Youth Outlook Multimedia*. She is also an editor and blogger with the Asian American magazine *Hyphen*.

**Andrew Choate** recently dreamt about a group of architects and city planners who successfully filed legal motions to preemptively protect themselves from any potential liability for future wars that could take place on or be caused by one of their designs. His book *Language Makes Plastic of the Body* was published by Palm Press. He is currently writing a book about the relationship between alimentary and aesthetic functioning called *Accounting for Taste*. He would like to thank Austin Meredith for assistance with the video.