

# EIKO & KOMA: RETROSPECTIVE PROJECT I: REGENERATION

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MARCH 2 – 5, 2011 | 8:30 PM

MARCH 6, 2011 | 3:00 PM

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CaLARTS



# EIKO & KOMA: RETROSPECTIVE PROJECT I: REGENERATION

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Conceived, Directed and Performed by Eiko & Koma  
Lighting Design by David Ferri  
Stage Manager: Rosemary Candelario

## ***Raven*** (2010)

Music by Robert Mirabal

*Raven* lasts approximately 25 minutes.

Robert Mirabal's music score was originally created for *Land* (1991) and adapted for *Raven*.

Pause

## ***Night Tide*** (1984)

*Night Tide* lasts approximately 12 minutes.

Music: sound collage by Eiko & Koma.

Pause

## **Excerpt from *White Dance*** (1976)

*White Dance* was originally 55 minutes. This excerpt lasts approximately 25 minutes.

Music:

Agincourt Carol (Anon.) and Concerto for Harpsichord No. 5 in F Minor (J.S. Bach)

*The following poem was printed in the original program for White Dance:*

A MOTH (*adapted from Mitsuharu Kaneko*)

No moon was seen  
But moonlight flooded everywhere,  
The sky like a layer of salt,  
The earth too dim and quiet  
That even dewdrops could be heard dropping  
Onto the bed of grass from the twigs above.

Just like a fan with broken vanes,  
There appeared, flapping,  
A nocturnal moth swimming through the foggy sea of moonlight  
In the broad sleeves of his crested gown,  
Heavy with a layer of dew.

He moved his wings as if in a dream,  
Showing by his course that changed continuously  
His determination not to drown.

To live is to be fragile,  
So is it a fault to nurture a dream?  
Oh moth! What is life to you?  
You've been exhausted ever since you lost your cozy pupa,  
You've carried the weight of time upon your back  
And gasped for breath  
While taking a rest  
After such a short journey,  
Then started on another voyage  
Into an unknown future.

While most of human kind are in the sleep of slaves  
The earth runs on at full tilt, like a frightened thief,  
With every burden on its shoulders  
Looking for the chance to cast them off.  
Only the few who cannot sleep so easily  
Know and await the coming punishment—  
The magnificent shipwreck on the promised land.

The moth flies on with silent eloquence,  
Flapping his fragile wings in clamorous  
Desperation.  
On each wing there appears some scales  
Like the layers of powder on a lady's mirror.  
Each scale means death.

The moth is overburdened.

As I wander along the beach around the lake,  
I sense under every step I make  
The softness of fallen corpses,  
O dead moths,  
And so I know that I am nothing more  
Than a tiny shadow in the moonlight night.

These REDCAT performances are funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts. NDP is supported by lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, with additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation, and the Boeing Company Charitable Trust.



Eiko & Koma's Retrospective is a project of Inta, Inc. Produced by Sam Miller and made possible, in part, by major support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and with additional support from the Japan Foundation's Performing Arts Japan program and the National Endowment for the Arts. Support for reconstructions of early work was provided in part by the American Express Foundation.

The creation of **Raven** was made possible, in part, with funds from the 2009-2010 Danspace Project Commissioning Initiative. Additional support was provided by the National Dance Project and the Japan Foundation's Performing Arts Japan program.

**Night Tide** was commissioned by Dance Theater Workshop (New York, NY) under a grant from the Jerome Foundation of Saint Paul, MN. Also made possible by National Endowment for the Arts.

**White Dance** was the first work Eiko & Koma showed in America (Japan Society, New York, NY, May 6, 1976). Its recreation was commissioned, with National Endowment for the Arts support, by the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts (Burlington, VT), where it was performed in May 2008.

## **A NOTE FROM EIKO & KOMA**

### **ABOUT THE RETROSPECTIVE PROJECT:**

When we started the Retrospective Project, it struck us as an odd thing to do. However, we realized that it had been nearly 40 years since Koma and I met and 35 years since we had moved to New York. In those 35 years, we have created some 40 pieces. It seemed like a good time to look back a little, so we can think about what is next.

The fact that many of our pieces are evening length has made it difficult for us to perform old works. And so we have often recycled movement, props and music we liked. For example, we wear similar costumes for *Fur Seal*, *Tree Song* and *Mourning* and we use similar materials for the sets of *Breath* and *Tree*. My “seaweed” solo belonged to *White Dance* but was used again in *Wind* (1993). This Retrospective Project is giving us an opportunity to go beyond recycling favorite phrases, and instead allows us to remember what we were thinking and find out how we think about it now.

Working on the project brought a little reflection. We usually make our own sets and costumes, choreographing on our own bodies. Inevitably we have had to grapple with our narrowness in movement vocabulary, tone and time sense. Thus, every time we make a work, we feel like we are squeezing ourselves dry, and that the work is the last one we ever want to make. But performing a piece and getting to know more about it has always brought us new juice and a refreshed desire. Looking back, this accumulation of our motifs and our limited versatility seem to have given us the kind of stubbornness, peculiarity and continuity we had wanted in our youth and still want for our life. There may not have been too many different things we both want to say or dance about, but we hope we make it clear that we really care about these few themes.

In working on our archive, we found a renewed appreciation of what we have often taken granted—our history of working together, the ephemerality (and non-materialistic nature) of performance works, and professional/personal relationships we have built with many individuals and institutions since we came to the US in 1976. We love that no matter how one tries, every performing artist’s work only exists in a particular space and time, in the eyes of an audience, and in the body of a performer. At best what remains is some memories. Our works and their residue have only been created because certain cultural institutions and their curators and directors have produced our work and/or have helped us deliver it to audience members.

It was in 1977 when a small organization called Some Serious Business presented our LA debut. We performed *White Dance* in the Pilot Theater. Since then we have presented twelve full evening length works in nine venues in Los Angeles. Whether you have seen any of our past works, or you are a new audience member, please share your thoughts with us by visiting our website.

### **ABOUT RAVEN:**

Because our Retrospective Project changes its offerings depending on the venues and communities we visit, we wanted to make one piece that is a constant to the project. But, as such, the piece has to be scalable and adaptable so we can perform it in a theater, gallery or an

outdoor site, as a full-evening piece or as a part of an evening. *Raven* is inspired by remembering *Land* (1991) and it also carries the theme of hunger that we have been thinking about the last few years. It is on this hungry land that the image of a raven came in. The set consists of canvas cloth that we scorched and burned. With the help of friends, we got black feathers from Indonesia and Cambodia.

### **ABOUT *WHITE DANCE*:**

While studying dance in Europe, we performed in various places. We liked the idea of being a singer-songwriter sort of a dancer as something not at all capitalistic, but we knew nothing about choreography. For each performance we decided roughly what each of us would or might do in what order and always titled our performance *White Dance*. We were young and had a desire to start anew away from our teachers in Japan who were calling their work as the dance of Utter Darkness. Once, when Eiko was injured, we were ready to stop dancing. "Not until you go to New York," said Lucas Hoving, a friend and our teacher in the Netherlands. We postponed abandoning Eiko & Koma. When we received an invitation from Beate Gordon to perform at the Japan Society in New York, we made a little more choreographic effort. By our actually deciding on music, costumes and program notes, this *White Dance* became our first choreographed piece. In 1976, on our way to New York, Irene and Paul Oppenheim, the first people we met in the US, produced an impromptu invitation-only concert in San Francisco, giving us the taste of an American audience. In the following four months in New York City, we performed *White Dance* at six venues. It was through this piece we met many friends, which made us move to New York the following year.

### **The Retrospective Project (2009-2012)**

#### **Eiko & Koma**

Prompted by the thought that the museum/gallery concept of a retrospective can be applied effectively to certain performing artists, Eiko & Koma have been working on constructing a multi-faceted retrospective of their work. The project includes performative and non-performative aspects, each of which reinforces the other in illustrating the artistry and trajectory of Eiko & Koma's career. Visual, media, performing art curators have worked in close collaboration with Eiko & Koma to examine almost forty years of collaborative history. This examination has been informative as Eiko & Koma develop their later work and conceive future projects.

Eiko & Koma spent 2009 designing the project as a whole, identifying partners and creating archives, documentaries, an exhibition and *Raven*. During 2010, they premiered and toured a retrospective program titled *Regeneration*. They also created and presented a living installation, *Naked*, at the Walker Art Center, which will be presented at Baryshnikov Arts Center this spring (March 29- April 9).

This summer a catalog of Eiko & Koma's work, *Time is not Even, Space is not Empty*, will be published by the Walker Art Center. A retrospective exhibition of the same title will open at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art (June 24 – November 13) that will include *Naked*, theater performances, performances of *Caravan Project*, and showings of media dances and documentaries. In New York, they will open another exhibition, *Residue: Some Years of Eiko & Koma*, in the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center (July 17 – October 30). In order to share and archive these activities, as well as past works, Eiko & Koma's website has been redesigned as a multi-media library--a compliment to the catalog mentioned above. Please visit [www.eikoandkoma.org](http://www.eikoandkoma.org)

Retrospective Project Producer .....Sam Miller  
Retrospective Project Coordinator ..... Lydia Bell  
Project Manager.....Ivan Sygoda  
Videographer .....Joanna Arnow

## BIOGRAPHIES:

**Eiko** (female) and **Koma** (male) were law and political science students in Japan when, in 1971, they each joined the Tatsumi Hijikata company in Tokyo. Their collaboration began as an experiment and then developed into an exclusive partnership. The following year, they started to work as independent artists in Tokyo in and at the same time began to study with Kazuo Ohno, who along with Hijikata was the central figure in the Japanese avant-garde theatrical movement of the 1960s. Neither Eiko nor Koma studied traditional Japanese dance or theater forms, and have preferred to choreograph and perform only their own works. Their interest in Neue Tanz, the German modern dance movement which flourished alongside the Bauhaus movement in art and architecture, and their desire to explore non- verbal theater took them to Hanover, Germany in 1972. There they studied with Manja Chmiel, a disciple of Mary Wigman. In 1973, they moved to Amsterdam, and for the next two years toured extensively in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Tunisia.

The Japan Society sponsored the first American performance of Eiko & Koma's **White Dance** in May of 1976. Since then, they have presented their works at theaters, universities, museums, galleries and festivals across North and South America, Europe and Asia. In 1983 Eiko & Koma performed for the first time at the American Dance Festival which later commissioned many of their works. **New Moon Stories** (1986) at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival marked their 10th anniversary in the United States and the first of five commissions from BAM. In 1996, **Autumn Passage** celebrated Eiko & Koma's 20th year anniversary.

During the past ten years Eiko & Koma have created and presented site-adaptable performance installations at dozens of sites for almost 50,000 audience members. **River** (1995), takes place in a body of moving water. **The Caravan Project** (1999), performed in a specially modified trailer, becomes a "museum by delivery" installation. **Offering**, which premiered in New York's Battery Park near Ground Zero in 2002, is a ritual of communal mourning. Dancing in the Street

produced **Offering** in parks, plazas and gardens throughout Manhattan. The work then toured across America and internationally. **Tree Song** (2004) honors trees, their resilience, rebirth and endurance. Whenever possible (almost always), Eiko & Koma perform these outdoor works free to the public. Eiko & Koma have also created two “living” gallery installations: *Breath*, commissioned by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1998, and *Naked*, commissioned by the Walker Art Center in 2010. For both of these engagements, Eiko & Koma performed for four weeks during all open museum hours.

Eiko & Koma’s stage collaborations include **Land** (1991, with native American flutist/composer Robert Mirabal and American visual artist Sandra Lerner), **Wind** (1993, with Chanticleer and its music director Joseph Jennings), the proscenium version of **River** (1997, with the Kronos Quartet, which performed Somei Satoh’s commissioned score live), **When Nights Were Dark** (2000, with composer Joseph Jennings and a Praise Choir), the proscenium version of **Offering** (2003, with the clarinetist David Krakauer), and **Be With** (2001, with Anna Halprin and cellist Joan Jeanrenaud),.

Designed to be performed in an intimate space, Eiko & Koma’s stage work **Death Poem** (2005) is a meditation on dying. **Cambodian Stories: An Offering of Painting and Dance**, (2006), a collaboration with nine young Cambodian painters-turned-performers, toured to eleven cities in the United States in the spring of 2006. **Mourning**, Eiko & Koma’s collaboration with pianist Margaret Leng Tan, premiered at Japan Society in New York in October 2007. Their 2008 project **Hunger** was a Joyce Theater twenty-fifth anniversary commission and a collaboration with Charian and Peace who were in the casts of *Cambodian Stories*.

Eiko & Koma are permanent residents of the United States living in New York City. Their honors include 1984 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the first “Bessies” (the New York Dance and Performance Awards, 1984) for **Grain** and **Night Tide**, 1990 Bessies for **Passage**, 1996 MacArthur Fellows, 2004 Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award, 2006 Dance Magazine award and the first United States Artists fellowship in 2006.

**David Ferri** (Lighting Designer) has worked with prominent choreographers such as Pina Bausch, Shen Wei, Doug Varone, Jane Comfort, Yin Mei, David Rousseve and Ballet Preljocaj. He has been the Production Manager for the prestigious American Dance Festival since 1996 training upcoming designers in America. Recipient of 1987-1988 Bessie Award for his design of Doug Varone's **Straits**, and 2000-2001 Bessie Award for Sustained Achievement in Lighting Design. Mr. Ferri is the resident Lighting Designer and Technical Director for The Vassar College Dance Department. Mr. Ferri was also resident Lighting Designer and Technical Director at PS 122 from 1985-1991. Mr. Ferri lives in New York between his travels and projects.

## **FOR EIKO & KOMA (INTA, INC.):**

Manager ..... Ivan Sygoda  
Resident Lighting Designer .....David Ferri

Eiko & Koma are members of Pentacle, a non-profit service organization for the performing arts. Mara Greenberg and Ivan Sygoda, Directors. 246 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, New York, NY 10018. Tel. 212-278-8111; Fax 212-278-8555. For booking information, contact Ivan Sygoda at the above address and number, extension 300. or at [ivans@pentacle.org](mailto:ivans@pentacle.org).

### Special Thanks

To Mark Murphy and the entire staff of REDCAT, Rosemary Candelario, Irene and Paul Oppenheim, many friends in UCLA and elsewhere in L.A. who have made visiting this city a special experience, and all the institutions and presenters who have presented our work in L.A.

## **UPCOMING PERFORMANCES AT REDCAT**

**March 7:** John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble

**March 8:** The Birdwoman and Her Dreams: Animated Works by Nancy Andrews

**March 10:** *Cointelpro 101*

**March 24:** Emanuele Arciuli

**March 26 – April 10:** REDCAT International Children's Film Festival

**April 2 – 3:** Lemi Ponifasio/Mau: *Tempest: Without a Body*

**April 5:** Ostad Abbos Kosimov

**April 28 – May 1:** Pat Graney Company: *Faith*

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