

**NEWS RELEASE*****9 Scripts from a Nation at War***

A collaboration between Sharon Hayes, Ashley Hunt, Katya Sander, David Thorne, and Andrea Geyer

November 22, 2008 - January 18, 2009

Opening reception: Friday, November 21, 6 – 9 pm

**Artists' roundtable discussion**

Saturday, November 22, 2 p.m.

**Public reading: *Combatant Status Review Tribunals*, pp. 002954-003064**

Saturday, Jan 10, 1-6 p.m.



"Script: Detainee: Please tell me when it is my turn to speak, because I don't know what's going on here," from *9 Scripts from a Nation at War* (2007), multi-channel video, courtesy of the artists

*9 Scripts from a Nation at War* is a multi-channel video installation responding to the conditions and questions that have arisen during the military conflicts in Iraq and

Afghanistan. The project considers the processes by which people, in the context of war, are positioned as certain kinds of "individuals" such as artists, soldiers, students, prisoners, detainees, citizens, Iraqis, Europeans or Americans.

First shown at *Documenta 12* in Kassel, *9 Scripts* is presented in a new configuration specifically for the Gallery at REDCAT. The exhibition draws on the extensive research of artists Sharon Hayes, Ashley Hunt, Katya Sander, David Thorne and Andrea Geyer and presents material sourced from people involved in or responding to the war.

This work is structured around a central question: how does war construct specific positions for individuals to fill, enact, speak from, or resist? A central theme is the investigation of how written and spoken language affects identity in times of conflict, as the language specific to institutions, professions and positions in society extend and limit the ways we situate ourselves in relation to others.

"...we're interested in the conditions for speech during this war, the conditions that allow for certain types of speech and not others, said *9 Scripts* Los Angeles-based artist and activist Ashley Hunt. "We think about this in terms of public and political speech, but also more subjectively, in terms of the more personal speech through which we describe and conceive of ourselves. In other words, *9 Scripts* engages how we speak ourselves in the context of war, when the roles we are called into shift and our personal stories intersect with the history we are trying to comprehend..."

The figures who speak--a veteran, a student, a citizen, an actor, a blogger, a lawyer, a journalist, an interviewer --are performed by actors and non-actors alike, some re-speaking their own words, others learning the words of others. In one video, a young man reads a text composed of selections from web blogs about war. Moving between conflicts in Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan, he constructs a first-person narrative that is not attributable to a single person despite his steady presence as the reader. Another video presents interviews with foreign correspondents based in New York discussing the ways in which they mediate information, the challenges of reporting from America to foreign audiences and the difficulty of suppressing personal beliefs and feelings from their coverage of events. These, and other "stagings," allow inquiry into the recording, reporting, learning and understanding of the present moment. In doing so, *9 Scripts* illustrates how language and speech are fundamental in defining structures of power. As we enter a new administration in the White House, *9 Scripts* offers a poignant and critical meditation on the active and passive roles we play in the context of war.

Events in conjunction with the exhibition include a roundtable discussion with the Los Angeles, New York and Berlin -based artists on Saturday, November 22 at 2 p.m.

On Saturday, January 10, there will be five-hour public reading from *Combatant Status Review Tribunals*, pp. 002 954-003064. These transcripts from 18 tribunals held at the U.S. military prison camp at Guantánamo Bay were made available on the U.S. Department of Defense web site in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. The 110 pages covered in the reading are a small fraction of the material generated by 558 tribunals. The sheer volume of transcripts has effectively obscured them from public view, and the readings make audible a record of these quasi-legal proceedings that

had been closed to public scrutiny. Participants will include local activists, artists and community leaders.

For more information: <http://www.9scripts.info/>

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Free gallery admission underwritten by generous support from Ovation TV. The Standard is the official hotel of REDCAT.

Gallery hours: noon to 6pm or intermission, closed Mondays

Admission to the gallery is always free

Visit [www.redcat.org](http://www.redcat.org) or call +1.213.237.2800 for more information

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