

INDEPENDENT CURATORS INTERNATIONAL

events

Performing Franklin Furnace



Coco Fusco, Observations of Predation in Humans: A Lecture by Dr. Zira, Animal Psychologist, 2013. Courtesy the artist and The Walker Art Center; Michael Smith, Baby Ikki 3rd Birthday Party, 1978. Courtesy of Franklin Furnace.

Performing Franklin Furnace

Pratt Manhattan Galleries, NYU Fales Library, and Participant Inc.

New York City, NY

February 20, 2015 – April 30, 2015

In 1976, artist Martha Wilson founded **Franklin Furnace** in Lower Manhattan as a primary source for producing and mediating artwork vulnerable to neglect due to lack of institutional support, ephemeral nature, or politically unpopular content. For twenty years, from 1976 to 1996, Franklin Furnace occupied a Tribeca storefront space presenting historical and contemporary exhibitions of artists' books as well as temporary installation and performance art to the public. Since its inception, Franklin Furnace has served the local, national and international community of activist artists—artists who have addressed urgent subjects such as war, poverty, disease, racism, sexism, and homophobia.

In 2011, Independent Curators International (ICI) organized the international touring exhibition **Martha Wilson**, which took Wilson out of New York and paired her with hosting curators to further explore the ideas behind her work and the history of Franklin Furnace. This exhibition will return to New York City for a grand finale in 2015 as **Performing Franklin Furnace** to activate several sites across the city in varying dimensions, while researching the current consequences of presenting live works and mining the ideas set forth in Franklin Furnace's mission.

Working in tandem, the NYU Fales Library and the Pratt Manhattan Gallery will present two simultaneous exhibitions of artworks and ephemeral documents by Martha Wilson and Franklin Furnace from February 20 – April 30, 2015 as part of the original touring exhibition. Franklin Furnace artist alum **Karen Finley** will host a day of student performances with her NYU class at Pratt on March 12th, 2015, which will be influenced by the exhibitions. While the two exhibitions will present the history of Wilson's complex artistic practice and involvement with Franklin Furnace, Martha Wilson and ICI have organized a third element to this New York presentation with a special focus on the contemporary. A series of performances will attempt to re-create Franklin Furnace as a physical space at Participant Inc. in lower Manhattan from February 26 – March 1st, 2015. The Participant Inc. program includes live works by **Michael Smith** and **Coco Fusco**, an open day of improvisational / in-progress performances hosted by **Clifford Owens**, and a day of screenings by Franklin Furnace alumni from each decade, including works by **Julia Heyward**, **Deborah Edmeades** and more.

Finally, a public panel will take place at Pratt Manhattan Gallery on April 22, 2015 to discuss key, complex issues surrounding the current tendency to re-perform historical works. Bringing together artists and curators who have extensive engagements with presenting performance works in New York, this panel will present several specific cases to explore the participants' diverse approaches.

**Pratt Manhattan Gallery and NYU Fales Library exhibition dates:
February 20 - April 30, 2015**

**Exhibition Openings:
Thursday, February 19, 2015**

NYU Fales Library 5-7PM

Pratt Manhattan Gallery 6-8PM

Student Performances with Karen Finley at Pratt Manhattan:

March 12, 2015

Participant Inc. Performance Dates:

Michael Smith – Thursday, February 26

Coco Fusco – Friday, February 27

Franklin Furnace Screenings – Saturday, February 28

Open performances hosted by Clifford Owens – Sunday, March 1st

**Each performance begins at 7PM*

Pratt Manhattan Symposium Date:

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 6:30PM

February 20, 2015 - April 30, 2015

presenter

Martha Wilson



Martha Wilson is a pioneering feminist artist and gallery director, who over the past four decades created innovative photographic and video works that explore her female subjectivity. She has been described by *New York Times* critic Holland Cotter as one of “the half-dozen most important people for art in downtown Manhattan in the 1970s.” In 1976 she founded Franklin Furnace, an artist-run space that champions the exploration, promotion and preservation of artist books, temporary installation, performance art, as well as online works. She is represented by P.P.O.W Gallery in New York; and has received fellowships for performance art from the National Endowment for

the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts; Bessie and Obie awards for commitment to artists’ freedom of expression; a Yoko Ono Lennon Courage Award for the Arts; a Richard Massey Foundation-White Box Arts and Humanities Award; and in 2013 received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University.

Photograph: Christopher Milne.

Part of Martha Wilson