



Saturday, October 3, 2015 to Sunday, December 20, 2015

Hotel Theory



Photo: Rafael Hernandez

The Gallery at REDCAT becomes a platform for performances, screenings, concerts, philosophical meditations, conversations and other events throughout the three-month exhibition *Hotel Theory*, which explores the possibilities of theory as an art form.

Over twenty artists participate with performances or performance documentation and video, audio, photographs, posters or other related ephemera that contextualize the time-based events. Borrowing its title from Wayne Koestenbaum's blissfully confusing book of the same name, the exhibition and series of events features a wide range of artistic disciplines, practices and points of departure.

With new work by emerging artists, and seminal works by influential, established artists, *Hotel Theory* suggests a historical overview — however limited—of artists and practices that question how art spaces contribute to theoretical debates.

With contributions by:

David Antin, Art & Language, Erick Beltrán and Bernardo Ortíz, José León Cerrillo and Sara Lunden, Chto Delat, Charles Gaines, Liam Gillick, Hanns Eisler Nail Salon (H.E.N.S.), Jackson Pollock Bar, Ian James, Steve Kado, Devin Kenny, Wayne Koestenbaum, Chris Kraus, David Levine, Snejanka Mihaylova and Lisa Holmqvist, Hila Peleg, The Red Krayola, Pedro Reyes, Bartholomew Ryan, Cally Spooner, Danna Vajda, V-Girls, Anton Vidokle, Claude Wampler, Ian Wilson and Tirdad Zolghadr.

***Hotel Theory* is curated by Sohrab Mohebbi in collaboration with Ruth Estévez.**

Event Schedule

Jackson Pollock Bar

Wayne Koestenbaum in Conversation with Bruce Hainley, a theory installation by Jackson Pollock Bar

Saturday, October 3, 7.30 pm

Sighs trapped by Liars: Art & Language on Jacques Louis David, a theory installation in the Style of the Jackson Pollock Bar

Sunday, October 4, 4.00 pm

Jackson Pollock Bar creates what they call “theory installations” that refer to discursive events such as lectures, interviews, panel discussions, and conferences. The group presents two performances: *Wayne Koestenbaum in Conversation with Bruce Hainley, a theory installation by Jackson Pollock Bar* that refers to a conversation between the two authors that was published in *Bidoun* magazine in 2008; and *Sighs Trapped by Liars*, based on a new script by the British conceptual art group Art & Language.

José León Cerrillo and Sara Lunden

Performance: *Re: The Wittgenstein Suite*

Saturday, October 3, 8.30 pm

Re: The Wittgenstein Suite is a musical and shadow performance that emerged as a collaboration between the visual artist José León Cerrillo and the musician and actress Sara Lunden. The collaboration started with a few verses extracted from Ludwig Wittgenstein’s book *Remarks on Color* (1950). Working with these elements, Lunden composed the lyrics of thirteen songs in harmony with Wittgenstein’s theoretical investigations of color and transparency. The collaborative performance is constructed around shadows created by Cerrillo using lamps, screens, and projectors with live music played by Lunden.

Erick Beltrán and Bernardo Ortíz

Performance: *Game Piece*

Saturday, October 10, 6.00 pm

Game Piece is a collaborative project of artists Erick Beltrán and Bernardo Ortíz. Based on the language-game experiments elaborated by the German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein in one of his last books, *Philosophical Investigations* (published posthumously in 1953), this project takes the form of a game in which Beltrán and Ortiz play together as opponents. *Game Piece* is a ludic dialogue situated in the space between theory and practice, concept and action, but also between graphic and text, avoiding explicit conclusions and leaving its ideas open to the game’s own strategies.

Wayne Koestenbaum

Performance: *Lounge Act*

Friday, October 16, 8.45 pm

Poet, critic, and artist Wayne Koestenbaum performs piano miniatures (Scriabin, Chopin, Albéniz, Fauré, Milhaud, Poulenc, and others) while incanting spontaneous *Sprechstimme*-style soliloquies. Koestenbaum developed these pieces over the past year, improvising words that stream in correspondence with the musical phrases in the score. He presents a selection of these songs and then will respond in the same musical manner to audience questions.

Steve Kado

Lecture performance: *October Jr.*

Wednesday, October 21, 7.30 pm

October Jr. is a faithful three-quarter-scale model of the Spring 1980 issue of the art magazine *October* (no. 12). All contents, images, advertisements, and articles are precisely rendered, just a little smaller. In this lecture-performance the artist and writer Steve Kado talks about his relationship with *October* (no. 12).

Devin Kenny

Performance

Wednesday, October 28, 7.30 pm

Devin Kenny is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, musician, and independent curator. Through performance, installation, and online presence, Kenny looks at how contemporary media shapes culture and identity. At REDCAT he presents a new piece that departs from his *Studio Workout* series, in which he uses the structure of hip-hop and loads it with art theoretical references.

Hanns Eisler Nail Salon (H.E.N.S.)

Performance: *Magic Counterhegemonic Playtime Adventure Set (Version 7)*

Saturday, October 31, 5.00 - 8.30 pm / Sunday, November 1, 4.00 – 7.00 pm

H.E.N.S. presents a magical playland intervention at REDCAT, exploding the spatiotemporal coordinates of late capitalism. Through a series of six games, children and their adult caretakers will embark on a radical playtime *dérive*, demystifying, deterritorializing, denaturing, decolonizing, dismantling, and destroying residual mystifications of "the art-architecture-Disneyland, psychopharmacological poopy-land of late capitalism."

Snejanka Mihaylova and Lisa Holmqvist

Performance: *A Prayer*

Saturday, November 7, 2.00 pm

In *A Prayer*, Snejanka Mihaylova explores the act of praying as one of the deepest models of the thinking process by reading from selected prayers from different religious traditions. The Swedish composer Lisa Holmqvist follows Mihaylova's reading with a musical performance of a prayer by six singers and recorder players. Prior to the performance, the Gallery is transformed into a workshop space where the artists rehearse with the performers and reflect on the acoustic dimension of cognitive experience.

The Red Krayola

Musical performance: *Corrected Slogans*

Saturday, November 7, 8:30 pm

*Theater at REDCAT, \$25 (members \$20)

Legendary and uncategorizable rock band The Red Krayola was founded in 1966 in Houston. While the group's lineup has changed over the years, the Los Angeles-based artist and composer Mayo Thompson was the band's cofounder and has been part of it since its beginning. At REDCAT Theater, the band will perform songs from its influential 1976 album *Corrected Slogans*. Many songs are arranged for voice and a single instrument, with lyrics that ruminate on theories of class struggle, alienation, historical materialism, and the conditions of advanced industrial societies.

***REDCAT theater events are ticketed. Tickets can be purchased on redcat.org.**

Screening: *The Museum of Immortality* (2015)

Followed by a conversation with Anton Vidokle.

Wednesday, November 11, 7.30 pm

A Museum of Immortality is a video documenting an experimental exhibition that took place at Ashkal Alwan in Beirut, in the summer of 2014. Based on a concept by Boris Groys, this show was a hypothetical model for a universal museum of all who ever lived, following ideas developed by 19th century Russian philosopher Nikolai Fedorov. The video includes interviews with Groys and some of the exhibition's contributors interspersed with footage from the installation and opening of the exhibition, as well as clips from Soviet science-fiction films.

"Fedorov considered the museum as an institution that could and should become the basis for the immortalization of the whole of mankind. He believed, namely, that the technique of museological conservation is a kind of anti-technique, since it does not produce new things but cares about the old ones. The museum is thus fundamentally at odds with progress, which necessarily replaces old things with new things. The museum is a machine for making things immortal. In so far as each human being is also merely a thing among other things, the museum's anti-technique can also be extended to the conservation of human beings."

—Boris Groys, 2012

A film by Anton Vidokle and Oleksy Radynski

Camera: Ayman Nahle, Edited by Adam Khalil

HD video, 25 minutes, 2015

With Boris Groys, Octavian Esanu, Nanna Neudeck and Roy Samaha.

Claude Wampler

Performance: *Lecture (w/o content w/choreography)*

Wednesday, November 18, 7.30 pm

For the performance *Lecture (w/o content w/choreography)*, Claude Wampler creates a choreographed composition, questioning the spaces of rhetoric and the relations between speaker and audience. Following an aesthetic practice developed over the course of her career, Wampler's performance at the

Gallery at REDCAT questions the physical necessity of a performer, reflected in the absence of a possible discourse and displayed through the faked public reaction.

Cally Spooner

Performance

Sunday, November 22, 7.30 pm

Cally Spooner's contribution to *Hotel Theory* draws on Maurizio Lazzarato's ideas of capital as a semiotic operator, Michel Foucault's notions of parrhesia (or truth telling), and the Stanislavski method for actors, constructing a script that outsources her own authorship to a set of performers. For this staged reading actors present delicately choreographed scenarios of excess, control, and emotionality.

This performance by Cally Spooner is commissioned and produced as part of Corpus, network for performance practice. A next iteration of this project will be presented at Playground (STUK arts centre & Museum M), Leuven, November 17-20, 2016. REDCAT is an associate partner of Corpus. www.corpus-network.org. Corpus is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Chance Event

Discussion: Chris Kraus, Becket Flannery, and Sylvère Lotringer

Tuesday, December 8, 7.30 pm

In 1996 at Whiskey Pete's Hotel & Casino, Chris Kraus organized the Chance Event: "a three-day philosophy rave in the Nevada desert." It was a convergence of the art world with philosophers, poets, and musicians in what was meant to be the Burning Man of French theory. The Gallery at REDCAT hosts a discussion with Kraus and artist Becket Flannery (who is writing a book on the Chance Event) on the occasion of *Semiotext(e)*'s publication of Jean Baudrillard's lecture for Chance.

Charles Gaines

Concert: *Manifestos 2*

Wednesday, December 9, 8.30 pm

*Theater at REDCAT, \$25 (members \$20)

In the REDCAT Theater, Los Angeles based artist Charles Gaines fills the stage with a nine-piece orchestra and large-scale video projection to create *Manifestos 2*, with a musical arrangement by the composer Sean Griffin, the director of Opera Povera. Gaines devised musical translations of four influential speeches using a conceptual rules-based musical notation system. The score is based on Malcolm X's last public speech, made in 1965 in Detroit's Ford Auditorium; *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (1999) by the Canadian Mohawk scholar and activist Taiaiake Alfred; Raúl Alcaraz and Daniel Carrillo's "Indocumentalismo Manifesto, an Emerging Socio-Political Ideological Identity" (2010); and Olympe DeGouges's 1791 Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. *Manifestos 2*, the second in a series of works by Gaines based on influential historical speeches, premiered at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2014.

***REDCAT theater events are ticketed. Tickets can be purchased on redcat.org.**

Danna Vajda

Performance: *bringourownbeing:123protaganism*

Sunday December 13, 4.30 pm

bringourownbeing:123protaganism is a performative script in three acts by Danna Vadja that deals with the duality of how ideas become attached to individuals, objects, images, and people and become disassembled in the process of circulation. The performance depicts a set of characters that include three outsiders embodied by Vajda's scale paintings of *Artforum* magazines and several paintings of company letterheads, used as masks for an actor who plays the roles of multiple participants of a think tank considering how to control the public impact of ideas.

Ian James

Listening Party

Sunday, December 13, 2-6 pm

In conjunction with his Vilém Flusser's "Towards a Philosophy of Photography," Ian James hosts a listening part at the REDCAT. James presents an abstracted audiobook of Vilém Flusser's seminal book *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, which claims that photography completely changed the course of history by substituting a linear form informed by writing for the dimensional form of the image. The piece is given an informational meditational treatment, accompanied by a soundtrack featuring instruments (primarily synthesizers), field recordings, and other audio. James will host a listening party in conjunction with the presentation of the piece in the gallery.

The day also includes **The Red Krayola Karaoke**.

Tirdad Zolghadr

Lecture: *Show-Show, a polemic addressing the relationship art has to theory, and the one theory has to art*

Thursday, December 17, 7.30 pm

Zolghadr's lecture discusses the methodological ambivalence that is prompted by an evasive language of soft dialectics and intellectualized innuendo in contemporary art. While acknowledging its productive possibilities, he contends that within the current constellation of the field, this language allows curators to abdicate responsibility vis-à-vis their colleagues, audiences, artists, and the art itself. The talk will draw on experiences of practicing and/or teaching curating in New York, Bern, Berlin, and Ramallah, and include self-critical accounts as well as occasional successes.

Pedro Reyes

Performance: *Baby Marx*

Sunday, December 20, 4.00 pm

Pedro Reyes presents a public puppetry performance that brings to life a chapter from his saga *Baby Marx*. *Baby Marx* uses the potential of entertainment and the playfulness of the art of puppetry in order to establish an educational tool that illustrates as much as interrogates the most important ideologies of the twentieth century.

Bartholomew Ryan

Reading: *HOTEL THEORY MEETS WRECKING BALL MANIFESTO*

Sunday, December 20, 5.00 pm

Celebrating the end of *Hotel Theory*, this event features some of the exhibition's participants together with other L.A.-based artists and activists, reading from a broad range of historical and contemporary manifestos. Sidestepping a recourse to specialized discourse, this event searches for theory through the voices, bodies, and attitudes of the readers who will make up its artificial community.

David Levine

Ongoing performance: *The Best New Work (1)*

Fridays, 2.00–6.00 pm, or until theater curtain time throughout the exhibition

The Best New Work is one of a series of performances designed to deliver classic works of art criticism to a wider audience than they generally reach, by performing them as personal monologues in the exhibition venue itself. The actors will drift through the gallery, bookstore, cafe, restrooms, and lounge area at REDCAT during opening hours, performing their essay as if on an endless loop. The attitude, delivery, volume, and mood of the performers will change depending on where in the building they find themselves, the time of day, whether or not they have an audience, and how big that audience is.

Performers: Laura Beckner, Jessica Ires Morris

Admission to the Gallery at REDCAT is always free.

Gallery at REDCAT is open Tuesdays through Sundays from noon to 6PM or until intermission. It is closed Mondays and major holidays.

REDCAT is located at the corner of W. 2nd and Hope Streets, inside the Walt Disney Concert Hall complex in downtown Los Angeles (631 West 2nd Street, Los Angeles.)

This exhibition is made possible by an Emily Hall Tremaine Exhibition Award. The Exhibition Award program was founded in 1998 to honor Emily Hall Tremaine. It rewards innovation and experimentation among curators by supporting thematic exhibitions that challenge audiences and expand the boundaries of contemporary art.

Hotel Theory is funded in part by generous support from: Goethe Institute, iaspis, International Program of the Visual Arts Fund, Sweden and Corpus, network for performance practice. Corpus is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union. Special thanks to the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, and Annina Nosei.



e-flux

HOTEL THEORY

Design: Jessica Fleischmann at Still-Room.

Hotel Theory

October 3–December 20, 2015

Opening: October 3, 6–9pm

REDCAT

631 West 2nd Street

90012 Los Angeles, CA

Hours: Tuesday–Sunday 12–6pm

www.redcat.org

Hotel Theory is an exhibition that considers theory as an art form. For three months the gallery is a platform for performances, screenings, concerts, philosophical meditations, conversations, and other events that explore the uses and abuses of theory in contemporary art. In recent decades, art spaces, museums and galleries have offered more lectures, conversations, and public presentations that aim to explore the artists' ideas and contextualize their work in relation to contemporary society. Art historical discourse aside, most of these events use the language that has been developed and adopted as the lingua franca of contemporary art, with its roots primarily in semiotics, post-structuralism, and critical theory. This is also the primary basis for the syllabi of art criticism and theory programs in art schools internationally. Artists in *Hotel Theory* use this language and divert it for their own purposes.

While conceptual art proposed a move away from the art object and popularized the notion of art as an idea that can be accessible without the intervention of mediators who explain what it means, contemporary artists also work with the critical and academic language that is used to teach, explain, and mediate art and artistic practices. The artists presented in *Hotel Theory* inhabit the various forms of academic discourse and infiltrate the traditional spaces reserved for it. While the scope of this realm is expansive, this exhibition focuses on performance works that concentrate on the aesthetics of discourse.

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With contributions by:

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Event schedule:

Jackson Pollock Bar

Wayne Koestenbaum in conversation with Bruce Hainley, a theory installation by Jackson Pollock Bar
Saturday, October 3, 7:30pm

Sighs Trapped by Liars: Art & Language on Jacques Louis David, a theory installation in the Style of the Jackson Pollock Bar

Sunday, October 4, 4pm

José León Cerrillo and Sara Lunden

Performance: *Re: The Wittgenstein Suite*

Saturday, October 3, 9pm

Erick Beltrán and Bernardo Ortíz

Performance: *Game Piece*

Saturday, October 10, 6pm

Wayne Koestenbaum

Performance: *Lounge Act*

Friday, October 16, 8:45pm

Steve Kado

Lecture performance: *October Jr.*

Wednesday, October 21, 7:30pm

Devin Kenny

Performance

Wednesday, October 28, 7:30pm

Hanns Eisler Nail Salon (H.E.N.S.)

Performance: *Magic Counterhegemonic Playtime Adventure Set (Version 7)*

Saturday, October 31, 5–8:30pm, and Sunday, November 1, 4–7pm

Snejanka Mihaylova and Lisa Holmqvist

Performance: *A Prayer*

Saturday, November 7, 2pm

The Red Krayola

Musical performance: *Corrected Slogans*

Saturday, November 7, 8:30pm

A Crime Against Art

Followed by a conversation with Anton Vidokle

Wednesday, November 11, 7:30pm

Claude Wampler

Performance: *Lecture (w/o content w/choreography)*

Wednesday, November 18, 7:30pm

Cally Spooner

Performance

Sunday, November 22, 7:30pm

Chance event

Discussion: Chris Kraus, Becket Flannery, and Silvère Lotringer

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Lecture: *Show-Show, a polemic addressing the relationship art has to theory, and the one theory has to art*

Thursday, December 17, 7:30pm

Pedro Reyes

Performance: *Baby Marx*

Sunday, December 20, 4pm

Bartholomew Ryan

Collective reading: *HOTEL THEORY MEETS WRECKING BALL MANIFESTO*
Sunday, December 20, 5pm

David Levine

Ongoing performance: *Best New Work (1)*
Friday, October 6, 2–6pm
Fridays, 2–6pm, or until theater curtain time throughout the exhibition

The Gallery at REDCAT focuses on experimentation through new commissions that often represents the artist's first major presentation in the US or Los Angeles. The exhibition program ventures to cross-pollinate shared concepts and critical discourses that connect art to other fields in service of an interdisciplinary program. Using different scales and temporary structures, the exhibition formats are flexible and constantly reformulated.

Admission to the Gallery at REDCAT is always free.



CalArts' Downtown Center
for Contemporary Arts



Tremaine Foundation



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ENTERTAINMENT VOICE



Photo by Rafael Hernandez

‘Hotel Theory’ Performance Series Puts Theory Into Practice

October 1, 2015

By T.S. Leonard

Since REDCAT is affiliated with CalArts, it’s no surprise that their programming often borders educational. For those who enjoy a side of schooling with their art consumption, the Gallery at REDCAT offers “Hotel Theory,” a three-month exhibition, “which explores the possibilities of theory as an art form.”

This exploration will be led by an eccentric assemblage of tour guides – more than 20 performers and purveyors will present their works throughout the series, with mediums that run the gamut from lecturing to puppetry.

If “Hotel Theory” sounds both daunting and ambitious, then it is an appropriate descendent of its namesake. “Hotel Theory,” the book, was a 2007 project by cultural critic Wayne Koestenbaum. “Hotel Theory” was more precisely, two books – one a non-fiction dissection of hotel culture, the other a pulp fiction novel – that appear side-by-side. This expression of form consciousness and interrogation of facts and fictions will be on full display in the REDCAT series.

On November 18, performance artist Claude Wampler presents “Lecture Without Content But With Choreography.” It’s a sparse, individual interrogation of the physical relationship between a performer and their audience, first executed by the artist in Taipei.

Sparse and individual will not be in order for Charles Gaines’ contribution, “Manifestos 2.” Gaines’ performance moves the series into the REDCAT Theater where a nine-piece orchestra will execute “devised musical translations” of political speeches, including the final public one made by Malcolm X. “Manifestos 2” is the second iteration of a concept Gaines debuted at the MoMA last year. It takes place on Wednesday, December 9 and is a ticketed event.

The other “Hotel Theory” events are free and open to the public. The program is an exciting slate of new works, of thoughtful experiments and brain-picking lectures that serves as a kind of visceral education in art theory.

The series allows for brief, welcoming encounters into these high-minded conceptual rooms. It’s an opportunity to see some of the boldest experimental minds in the art world discussing their work in an immersive way. And it’s a hell of a lot cheaper than art school.

“Hotel Theory” has vacancies on various dates from Oct. 3 to Dec. 20 at the Gallery at REDCAT.

Art in America

PREVIEWS OCT. 14, 2015

The Agenda: This Week in Los Angeles

by A.I.A. Editors

A.i.A. editors suggest a few of the myriad events in L.A. this week: a performance by Wayne Koestenbaum at REDCAT; a screening of Wynne Greenwood's videos at 356 Mission; a program devoted to experimental cinema and language presented by Los Angeles Filmforum; and a 12-hour cycle of music and meditation at UCLA's Broad Art Center.

Friday, October 16, 8:45 p.m.

Performance: Wayne Koestenbaum, *Lounge Act*

Wayne Koestenbaum is a multidisciplinary force of irreverence and insight. The poet and critic, whose paintings were unveiled to a wide audience at White Columns in 2012, last month debuted his musical stylings at The Kitchen with a suite of piano miniatures and improvised soliloquies. This week, Koestenbaum brings the performance to L.A., as part of a program of works at REDCAT named for his 2007 novel, *Hotel Theory* (Soft Skull Press). In that book, the left side of the page was a phenomenological study of hotels and isolation as it pertains to writing, while the right side was a novel about an imagined hotel meeting between Lana Turner and Liberace. At REDCAT, Koestenbaum performs a selection of pieces by Scriabin, Chopin, Albéniz and others, while improvising monologues in correspondence with the musical phrases. He'll respond to audience questions in the same musical manner.

REDCAT, 631 West 2nd Street

Saturday, October 17, 7:00 p.m.

Screening: Wynne Greenwood, selections from Tracy + the Plastics new documentation

It's been 16 years since Wynne Greenwood first toured her video performance band Tracy + the Plastics, and nine years since she officially retired the outfit. In conjunction with the New Museum's exhibition, "Wynne Greenwood: Kelly," which premieres a complete and newly mastered archive of Tracy + the Plastics, 356 Mission presents a screening of selections from that archive. The band, which consisted of Greenwood as vocalist accompanied by videos of herself portraying alter-ego bandmates Nikki and Cola, combined feminist queer politics with performance art and underground music.

356 Mission, 356 South Mission Road

Sunday, October 18, 7:30 p.m.

Screening: Experimental Landscapes I: Landscape and the Body at Work and Play

Los Angeles Filmforum presents the first screening in a series devoted to landscape in experimental cinema. This program of works by Sharon Lockhart, Francis Alÿs and Phill Niblock explores the connection between the human form, the environment and the moving image. The body as a unit of measurement is the thread which ties together Niblock's *Trabajando Dos (Mexico)* (1973-74), Alÿs's *REEL-UNREEL* (2011) and Lockhart's *NŌ* (2003) and *PÓDWORKA* (2009). Lockhart will be present for the screening.

Spielberg Theatre at the Egyptian, 6712 Hollywood Boulevard

Sunday, October 18, 12 p.m.-12 a.m.

Music: CYCLE

At the UCLA Broad Art Center, artist Jesse R. Fleming organizes CYCLE, a 12-hour event involving music, meditation, installation and food. For the event, nearly 20 invited artists and facilitators were each asked to interpret the theme of regeneration. In seven sets separated by 30-minute breaks, musicians—mostly from the drone and electronic genres—are paired with visual artists and guided meditation facilitators. Participating musicians include Diva Dompe, Electric Sound Bath, Eric Parren, Keenan Hartsten, Kid 606, Lewis Pesacov and M Geddes Gengras.

UCLA Broad Art Center, 240 Charles E. Young Dr.



Artist You Should Know: Mayo Thompson and Red Krayola

NOVEMBER 5, 2015

By [Eric J. Lawrence](#)

Since the late '60s, the **Red Krayola** has served as one of America's premiere art-rock bands, marrying the ramshackle Dadaist blues of Captain Beefheart with the more academic approach of English avant-rockers Henry Cow. While their records have been consistently distinct from anything else on the scene (or even from their own discography!) the one unifying component of all their releases has been the leadership of main singer, songwriter and guitarist **Mayo Thompson**.

From their psychedelic-flavored debut, *The Parable of Arable Land* in 1967, to this decade's *Five American Portraits* (featuring musical sketches of John Wayne, president George W. Bush & Wile E. Coyote), Thompson and his ever-rotating Red Krayola cohorts have reflected, deconstructed and reconstituted the notion of pop music.

To my mind, this makes their rare appearance at [REDCAT in downtown Los Angeles this Saturday \(Nov. 7\)](#) an event not to be missed.

Thompson's career has been an amazing series of records, events and projects, bringing him in contact with an enviable array of artists through the years. These include the **13th Floor Elevators**; **Guy Clark**; **John Fahey**; visual artist Robert Rauschenberg, filmmaker Derek Jarman; electronic music pioneer **Dieter Moebius**; industrial rockers **Pere Ubu** (which he joined for a couple of years); and post-punk bands the **Raincoats**, **Cabaret Voltaire**, and **the Fall** (all three of whom Thompson produced key recordings for in the late-70s). His more recent collaborations were released by Chicago-based label Drag City with **John McEntire** of **Tortoise**, and **Jim O'Rourke** and **David Grubbs** of **Gastr del Sol**.

Thompson brings a palpable energy to his projects, which tempers the often-thorny music with humor and a decided lack of pretentiousness. But there is also an underlining artistic intention behind the tunes, using improvisational techniques from jazz and complex structures from art music, combined with a desire to sound utterly unique.

“It just built into this rather oppositional, contrarian relationship to the given,” Thompson told me in a phone conversation last week. “We didn’t play together, we played at the same time.”

This Saturday’s REDCAT performance will be based around the Red Krayola’s 1976 album *Corrected Slogans*, released in conjunction with the Art & Language conceptual art collective. It’s an oddball collection of songs that combine fairly accessible and stripped-down folk-rock melodies with heady, cryptic politically-themed lyrics that delve into topics such as sociology, feminist Harriet Martineau, the ’60s activist group Students for a Democratic Society, Aristophanes’ play “Thesmophoriazusaes,” and Marxist theoreticians Leon Trotsky & Georgi Plekhanov (which makes it the perfect album to perform under REDCAT’s larger umbrella exhibition, *Hotel Theory*).

A high-brow educational opportunity disguised as a concert, or a low-brow tongue-in-cheek rock extravaganza based on historical themes? Who knows. I’m sure I’ll be as mystified as the grand majority of the audience (and maybe even some of the band), but that’s part of the fun.