
PITTSBURGH—In partnership with Carnegie Mellon University’s School of Drama, the Miller Gallery on the CMU campus opens “From the Edge,” a provocative collection of performance design pieces reflecting society and politics during the Bush and Obama administrations.

The exhibit, curated by Artistic Director and Lead Curator Susan Tsu, a professor of costume design in the School of Drama, will be unveiled at an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m., Friday, Jan. 16. The reception and exhibition, which runs through March 1, are free and open to the public.

“From the Edge” reflects works from 2007 to 2011 and was first shown at the Prague Quadrennial in 2011. The curatorial team, led by Tsu, asked artists to submit works that were associated with social and political issues. Of the 370 works of art submitted, just 37 were chosen to become a part of the exhibit.

“From the Edge” tackles the foremost issues and events from this era, including 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, health care, moral questions brought to the fore by war and fundamentalist beliefs, and issues relating to views on race in society. This exhibit evokes a range of emotions, from celebratory to somber.

“I’m hoping people come and stop to read the labels [under the individual pieces], and that they get to know the stories behind them,” Tsu said. “People who don’t like theater might think it’s stuffy, but theater is inclusive enough that it can touch a wide range of people.”

For example, one piece in the exhibition is a photo of a live performance of artist Paul Chan's production of “Waiting for Godot” on the streets of New Orleans a year after Katrina, when Chan witnessed firsthand the devastation of the Lower Ninth Ward as city residents were still waiting for help.
from FEMA. “Godot” premiered on Friday, Nov. 2, 2007. Another series of images was inspired by the
wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Other photographs in the exhibition feature more lighthearted fare, such as scenes from drag
performer Joey Arias’ show, “Arias with a Twist,” with set and costumes by French fashion designer
Thierry Mugler, and scenes from “The Wiz,” performed by Denver’s Physically Handicapped Actors and
Musical Artists League (PHAMALy).

Tsu said “From the Edge” goes beyond making a social or political statement; the exhibit also is
about unearthing the meaning behind the images. The pieces depicting war show how a soldier can come
home from a tour of duty a changed person or, in the case of PHAMALy’s “The Wiz,” how performers
with a disability can have just as strong of an impact on an audience as performers without disabilities.

“We want this exhibit to elicit curiosity,” Tsu said. “We’re hoping for a broad audience of theatre
colleagues and people in the tri-state area, and we’re hoping for a strong student presence.”

As the first new exhibit of 2015, “From the Edge” is what Tsu calls a collection of “challenging,
irreverent work.” Hoping to break down stereotypes, the exhibit will make observers look beyond the
glamour typically associated with American theater to understand the grit and seriousness behind the best
examples of performance design showing social and political issues of today.

###

**Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University** ([http://www.cmu.edu/millergallery](http://www.cmu.edu/millergallery)) supports the
creation, understanding and growth of contemporary art through exhibitions, projects, lectures, events and
publications. The gallery aspires to engage diverse audiences and to create and strengthen communities
through art and ideas. The Miller Gallery is the contemporary art gallery of Carnegie Mellon University
and is a unit of the College of Fine Arts. It is located in the Purnell Center for the Arts on Carnegie
Mellon’s campus in Pittsburgh, Pa. The Miller Gallery is open to the public from 12 – 6 p.m., Tuesday
through Sunday. Admission is free.

**About Carnegie Mellon University:** [Carnegie Mellon](http://www.cmu.edu) is a private, internationally ranked research
university with programs in areas ranging from science, technology and business, to public policy, the
humanities and the arts. More than 12,000 students in the university's seven schools and colleges
benefit from a small student-to-faculty ratio and an education characterized by its focus on creating
and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. A global
university, Carnegie Mellon has campuses in Pittsburgh, Pa., California's Silicon Valley and Qatar,
and programs in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Mexico.