

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Rebecca Klapper

805.966.5373 x104

[press@mcasantabarbara.org](mailto:press@mcasantabarbara.org)



For Immediate Release.

**Exhibitions:** assume vivid astro focus: *avalanches volcanoes asteroids floods*, and **Bloom Projects Exchange Series:** Sa Sa Bassac presents Khvay Samnang

**Opening reception:** Saturday, August 13, 2016, 6 – 8 pm

**Exhibitions on view:** August 14, 2016 - January 1, 2017

Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara presents *avalanches volcanoes asteroids floods*, a newly commissioned multi-sensory and site-specific installation by the vibrant New York/Berlin-based artist collective, **assume vivid astro focus (avaf)**. In the **Bloom Projects** gallery, MCASB features a solo exhibition of new and recent work by Khvay Samnang, in collaboration with *Sa Sa Bassac*, a gallery and resource center based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.



**From left to right:** assume vivid astro focus, *ângeles veloces arcanos fugaces*, 2014, Roller disco installation at Faena Art Center, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Courtesy the Artist. Photo: Carolina Bonfanti; assume vivid astro focus, Casa Triângulo no Pivô, 2014, Mixed media installation, Casa Triângulo's 25th Anniversary exhibition of Pivô, Edifício Copan, São Paulo, Brasil, Courtesy the Artist. Photo: Edouard Fraipont

**assume vivid astro focus: *avalanches volcanoes asteroids floods***

Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara has commissioned **assume vivid astro focus (avaf)** to produce an immersive and tactile setting that comprises a range of mixed media, including printed rugs mixed with hanging fabric, theatrical backdrops, and wall coverings. A stimulating experience, audiences will be invited to interact

-MORE-

with the space by laying on the ground, listening to or playing music, rearranging elements, and creating their own performances using the provided materials and environment. This exhibition will act as a kind of survey or quasi-retrospective of images that avaf has previously utilized in their 10+ career. It will also include documentary pictures of past installations and performances, details of wallpapers, and screenshots of seminal video works. *avalanches volcanoes asteroids floods* uses the avaf acronym, a play on words or “combo” often utilized by the artists, to refer to our collective anxiety around natural disasters (particularly sensitive in California and Brazil at the moment). More broadly, the title is used to upend the traditionally linear historical survey exhibition, suggesting a more dynamic or vigorous framework.

assume vivid astro focus (avaf) was founded in New York City in 2001 by Eli Sudbrack (b. 1968, Rio de Janeiro, BR) and Christophe Hamaide-Pierson (b. 1973, Paris, FR). The duo often collaborate with musicians, designers, dancers, and other artists to form a hybrid, multidisciplinary body of work. Personal style and a sense of exuberant optimism characterize their aesthetic imprint, while also critically exploring the politics of free speech, equal rights, and freedom of expression. The conscious adaptation of diverse forms and expressions to create a syncretic outcome has roots in the history of *antropofagia* (cannibalism)\* and other Brazilian traditions such as *Tropicalismo*. Artists/collectives ranging from Hélio Oiticica and Felix Gonzalez-Torres to Gran Fury and General Idea also provide aesthetic and theoretical inspirations. However, avaf resists narrow art historical-specific references, instead looking to a host of cultural, political, geographical, and sociological sources that include Marvel Comics, Vogue-ing, raves, or the internet.

avaf's artist statement describes their aesthetic approach:

*“The world we live in nowadays is a world in which ideas and information disseminate rapidly and reveal themselves in this infinite accumulative unfolding looping process. You have the feeling of being devoured by this infinite swirl of information black hole... This has given way to a new kind of human species, capable of absorbing and digesting loads of information at high speeds. A new cross breed between a human and a virus is born, whose essence is based on the idea of contamination, and the existence in different dimensions and bodies, commuting easily between them... Obsession, curiosity, generosity and anxiety are center elements in our projects – particular mind-sets necessary to cover every single aspect related to the ideas we are discussing at a given moment. Space and time are multi-layered and multi-faceted – and people’s perception/experience of the world is finally heading the same way... In our own way and in a very general sense, this is the core belief of all avaf projects: freedom to share, spread, absorb, assume, contaminate, inseminate, devour.”*

\*The term was used in *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928) by the [Brazilian poet and polemicist Oswald de Andrade](#). The “Manifesto’s” argument is that [Brazil’s](#) history of “cannibalizing” other cultures is its greatest strength, while playing on the [modernists’ primitivist](#) interest in cannibalism as an alleged tribal rite. Cannibalism becomes a way for Brazil to assert itself against European post-colonial cultural domination. The Manifesto’s iconic line is “Tupi or not Tupi: that is the question.” The line is simultaneously a celebration of the [Tupi](#), who practiced certain forms of ritual cannibalism (as detailed in the 16th century writings of [André Thévet](#), [Hans Staden](#), and [Jean de Léry](#)), and a metaphorical instance of cannibalism: it eats [Shakespeare](#).

-MORE-



**From left to right:** Khvay Samnang, *Footprints of Yantra Man*, 2015, Installation view at Bethenian Kunstlerhaus, Berlin, Courtesy the Artist; Khvay Samnang, *Rubber Man*, 2015, Three-channel video installation, color, sound, 3'36" / 3'29" / 3'54", Installation view at Sa Sa Bassac, Courtesy the Artist

## Bloom Projects Exchange Series: Sa Sa Bassac presents Khvay Samnang

In collaboration with *Sa Sa Bassac*, a gallery and resource center based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, MCASB presents a solo exhibition of new and recent work by **Khvay Samnang** (b. 1982, Svay Rieng, CM). The artist is known for making work that offers new interpretations of history and contentious current affairs, while resisting the polarizing language known to media and legal reports. Prompted by instinct and hearsay, as well as direct experience and media sources, Samnang follows stories that he believes require intervention. He has often addressed the impacts of colonialism and globalization on Cambodia, in an artistic practice that spans performance, photography, video, installation and sculpture.

Khvay's solo exhibitions include *The Pacific Project: Khvay Samnang*, Orange County Museum of Art (2016); *Rubber Man*, Jeu de Paume, Paris and CAPC, Bordeaux (2015); *Human Nature*, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Singapore (2014); and *Newspaper Man*, SA SA BASSAC, Phnom Penh (2012). His group exhibitions include *The Khmer Rouge and the consequences. Documentation as artistic memory work*, Akademie der Kunste, Berlin (2015), *A Time For Dreams*, IV Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (2014), *If The World Changed*, 4th Singapore Biennale (2014), *Everyday Life*: 4th Asian Art Biennale, Taipei Fine Art Museum (2013), *Sights and Sounds: Global Video Art*, The Jewish Museum, NYC (2013), *Phnom Penh: Rescue Archaeology*, ifa, Berlin and Stuttgart (2013), and *Poetic Politic*, Kadist Foundation, San Francisco (2012).

Khvay was a resident Bethenian Kunstlerhaus, Berlin (2014-2015). In 2015 was nominated for the AIMIA AGO Photography Prize Long List, Canada; the Sovereign Asian Art Prize, Hong Kong; and Prudential Eye Awards Best Emerging Artist in Asia Using Photography, Singapore.

###

### About Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara:

Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) is a non-profit, non-collecting museum dedicated to the exhibition, education, and cultivation of the arts of our time. Formerly Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF), MCASB is the premier venue for contemporary art between Los Angeles and San Francisco. MCASB is located at the Paseo Nuevo Shopping Center Upper Arts Terrace in downtown Santa Barbara, CA. With the opening of the MCASB Satellite @ Hotel Indigo Santa Barbara in February of 2012, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara becomes one museum with two locations. Located in the Hotel Indigo Santa Barbara at 121 State Street, the MCASB Satellite space features yearlong exhibitions of stimulating contemporary artworks.

**Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB), 653 Paseo Nuevo, Santa Barbara, CA 93101**

p: 805.966.5373

f: 805.962.1421

hello@mcasantabarbara.org

mcasantabarbara.org