

The leading edge of the avant-garde

The 'Unfolding Kafka Festival' once again brings artistic experimentation to both Bangkok and Chiang Mai

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The "Unfolding Kafka Festival" provides a platform for outstanding artistic trends in the field of contemporary art in Thailand. For the second edition, the festival will be held in Bangkok from Nov 3-22, and in Chiang Mai from Nov 24 and 25.

With Franz Kafka as the starting point and seed inspiration, the festival incorporates various artistic disciplines, from media performance to dance, film to visual art. Kafka's fascinating style and mysterious characters provide the artists plenty of room for interpretation. In a natural and rational way, Kafka combines the obscure and surreal with the real world. But this time the festival wants to expand on Kafka's works through abstract and conceptual art, and ask questions of how choreography, physical movements, installations, sculpture and visual art interact to address animalism, gender and identity, folding and unfolding material or bodies.

In November, among the panoply of performances, the festival will highlight the immersive media/sound/performance experience by the internationally-known Japanese artist Hiroaki Umeda. Supported by the Japan Foundation, Umeda will perform Holistic Strata for two nights on Nov 20 and 21 at the Sodjai Pantoomkomol Center for Dramatic Arts, Chulalongkorn University, in Bangkok, and a Southeast Asian premiere, Duo, on Nov 24 at the Maiiam Contemporary Art Museum in Chiang Mai.

On the same nights, presented as a double bill, dancer Roni Chadash, supported by the Embassy of Israel in Thailand, will perform her creation Goofy, in which audiences will be amazed by the brilliant use of her physicality without allowing the audience to see her head through almost the whole piece. Then for the Double Bill of Director's Pick, on Nov 11 and 12, there is a special presentation (exclusively for festival pass-holders) at the Rose Hotel Bangkok, allowing those present to experience an intimate and "headless" encounter with Chadash's dance installation NO-Body.

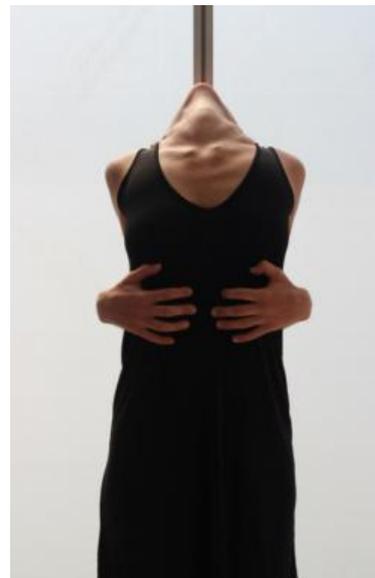
Since Kafka's influence spans across Europe, this year's programme also features a French artist. In collaboration with l'Ambassade de France en Thaïlande, the street performance group 1 Watt will perform a solo street performance called Be Claude. The male street artist explores the themes of gender and identity through his feminine side in an absurd and funny, but nonetheless philosophical, manner. Be Claude will take place on the Festival Grand Opening on Nov 9 around Soi Goethe/Sathon 1, but also on Students' Night (Nov 10) at the Rose Hotel Bangkok.

Finally, in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut Thailand, the festival offers a wide variety of exhibitions and activities for those interested in visual art, graphic design and movies. From Nov 3-12 at Bangkok CityCity Gallery, the Berlin-based Japanese visual artist Yoko Seyama will present for the first time in Southeast Asia her art installation Saiyah #2.3, where light folds and unfolds to continuously modify the surrounding space in various hues.

On Nov 7 and 8 at the Goethe-Institut Thailand, the Head of the Filmmuseum Muenchen (Collections), Stefan Droessler will give a lecture in which he immerses us into Kafka's world and reality through excerpts of rare reconditioned silent films, with excerpts of his diaries, pictures from the places he lived and cinemas he visited, as well as clips from the movies he saw in the beginning of the 20th century.

Finally, from Nov 3 to Dec 17 in Soi Goethe and at the Goethe-Institut Thailand, don't miss the exhibition "K: KafKa In KomiKs", where you can learn about Kafka's dark universe through graphic artworks. This graphical narrative serves not only an artistic and creative function; it also makes the abstraction more visible, accessible and tangible, allowing both Kafka enthusiasts and new readers to experience and interpret him in their own way.

Also on offer are special tours of the exhibition for students and other groups, to make the experience more comprehensible.



Roni Chadash. Photo © Oren Lavie / Unfolding Kafka



Holistic Strata by S20 Hiroaki Umeda. Photo © Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media

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