

CREATIVETIME

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ARTIST CONTINUES NEW YORK CONVERSATIONS ABOUT IRAQ ON A THREE-WEEK ROAD TRIP ACROSS THE COUNTRY



CREATIVE TIME AND NEW MUSEUM PRESENT IT IS WHAT IT IS: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT IRAQ ROAD TRIP A New Commission by Jeremy Deller for the Three M Project

(March 3, 2009 New York, NY) Creative Time and the New Museum are pleased to announce that on **March 25, *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*** a project by British artist **Jeremy Deller** will depart New York for a tour by RV of at least **13 cities nationally**.

On February 11 Creative Time and the New Museum presented *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*, a new commission that encourages public discussion of the history, present circumstances, and future of Iraq that is active at the museum through March 22. On March 25, **Jeremy Deller, Jonathan Harvey** (an Iraq war veteran and recently demobilized Psychological Operations platoon sergeant), and **Esam Pasha** (an Iraqi refugee, artist, and former translator for the Chief Advisor in the British Embassy of Baghdad), will board an RV parked outside the museum and depart on a three-week road trip stopping in at least 13 cities between New York to Los Angeles. When the RV arrives in Los Angeles, the project be shown at the Hammer and will also be shown in the fall at Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, as part of the Three M project.

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In each of the scheduled cities, a local institution will “host” *It Is What It Is* by selecting and arranging to use a public site, in collaboration with Creative Time, for the project. These sites include public parks, libraries, university campuses, and others. Please see below for a complete list of scheduled cities and hosts. The project will also be making several impromptu stops along the way, to produce informal conversations in rest stops and other sites where possible. The public will be encouraged to visit the project and participate in unscripted, open-ended conversations with guest experts Harvey and Pasha. Deller will not take part in conversations: he is aboard the RV as a producer and documentarian.

This project will broaden and deepen conversations that were held at the New Museum by 34 guest experts selected by the artist. “I am looking forward to going on the road,” says Deller, “to bring these conversations to a wider range of people.” Jonathan Harvey, a guest expert traveling with Deller, said, “We’re going to try to spur dialog. It’s not just in New York City or Los Angeles that conversations like these need to happen.”

Also traveling with the experts is a car destroyed in a bombing on Al-Mutanabbi Street in Baghdad in March 2007. This tragedy killed over 30 people, and has taken on added significance because the street, named after a well-known Iraqi poet, was the site of numerous book markets and cafés, and was considered the nexus of Baghdadi cultural and intellectual discourse. The car is meant to ground conversations in the facts, figures, and eyewitness descriptions that have been lacking in most information about the Iraq war, and is intended to serve as a visual aid to prompt open dialogue and civil conversation. It was also one of a sparse selection of objects in the presentation at the New Museum.

It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq is curated for Creative Time by: Nato Thompson, Curator; and for the New Museum by: Laura Hoptman, Kraus Family Senior Curator, and Amy Mackie, Curatorial Assistant. The research team includes: Shane Brennan, Sarah Demeuse, Ozge Ersoy, Jazmin Garcia, and Terri C. Smith.

ROAD TRIP SCHEDULE

(Dates are subject to change. See www.conversationsaboutiraq.org for complete information.)

March 26: Washington, DC, Institute for Policy Studies, Provisions Library, and ArtsUSA

March 27: Richmond, VA, hosted by Virginia Commonwealth University

March 28: Philadelphia, PA, hosted by Slought Foundation

March 30: Cincinnati, OH, hosted by the Contemporary Arts Center

March 31: St. Louis, MO, hosted by the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

April 1: Kansas City, MO, hosted by Grand Arts

April 3: Memphis, TN, hosted by UrbanArt Commission

April 4: Summertown, TN, hosted by The Farm Community

April 7-8: New Orleans, LA, host to be announced

April 9: Houston, TX, hosted by the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts

April 13: Santa Fe, NM, hosted by SITE Santa Fe

April 15-16: Phoenix, AZ, hosted by Future Arts Research of Arizona State University

April 19: Los Angeles, CA, artist talk at the Hammer Museum

April 21: Los Angeles, CA, opening at the Hammer Museum

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Over the past ten years, **Jeremy Deller** has archived, examined, and often staged demonstrations, exhibitions, historical reconstructions, parades, and concerts as a way to both celebrate

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and critically examine them as forms of social action. His work focuses on cultural history—how it is made, recorded, manipulated, and remembered. One of his most well-known works, a re-creation of a battle between pickets and police during the miner's strike in the north of England in 1984, was subsequently made into a documentary by Mike Figgis called *The Battle of Orgreave* and was broadcast internationally. A more recent work, a film about Texas entitled *Memory Bucket*, won Deller the prestigious Turner Prize in 2004.

ABOUT THE GUEST EXPERTS

Jonathan Harvey has been a Platoon Sergeant in the United States Army since 1997 and is currently serving in the U.S. Army Reserve. A specialist in psychological operations, Harvey has lived in more than twenty-five countries, assisting in projects that include progressive teaching and leadership and management roles in academic and military environments. He has received many honors during his military career, including the Bronze Star Medal, seven Army Achievement medals, and an Army Commendation Medal. He is also an experienced teacher, including work at Veteran's Upward Bound where he taught low-income military veterans basic skills to prepare them for college classes. Harvey received his Bachelor of Arts in philosophy, politics, and economics from the University of Pennsylvania, where he is currently pursuing his Master of Liberal Arts.

Born in Iraq, **Esam Pasha** is a translator, artist, and journalist who has worked as an interpreter for the British Embassy in Baghdad and the Coalition in Iraq, including military groups such as the 101st Airborne and the Florida National Guard. Pasha has also been an interpreter at publications such as *The Boston Globe* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. He was a freelance journalist for the United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network and has written articles on art for international journals such as *The Art Newspaper*. Pasha, who is a well-known artist in Iraq, has also exhibited in the United States and Europe. In 2003, he executed the first post-war mural in Iraq, which is located in Baghdad.

ABOUT CREATIVE TIME

Creative Time is a nonprofit art organization based in New York City. For the past 35 years, Creative Time has presented artists' dream projects in the public sphere in New York, and now on a national scale. Creative Time works with a belief in the importance of art in society, artists who make work outside New York City, and the transformative power of the combination of art and social action. *It Is What It Is* continues the organization's long history of presenting timely ideas that challenge and provoke the public to think about the times from unusual vantage points, including such projects as Jenny Holzer's *For New York City*, in which the artist's truisms were pulled by airplanes over the skies of New York City; Paul Chan's *Waiting for Godot in New Orleans*, a free, outdoor production of the Beckett play in the Lower Ninth Ward and Gentilly, New Orleans; and *Democracy in America: The National Campaign*, which brought artist commissions to six cities nationally and a major exhibition in the historic Park Avenue Armory in New York. Recent projects include *Tribute in Light*, which served as a gesture of hope and healing after 9/11; *Playing the Building* by David Byrne, a musical installation in a disused building in Lower Manhattan; and Doug Aitken's *sleepwalkers*, a film projected on the exterior of the Museum of Modern Art.

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ABOUT THE NEW MUSEUM

Founded in 1977, the New Museum is Manhattan's only dedicated contemporary art museum and among the most respected internationally, with a curatorial program known for its global scope and adventurousness. The inauguration of its new, state-of-the-art building on the Bowery, has made the New Museum a leading destination for new art and new ideas.

ABOUT THE THREE M PROJECT

In 2004, the Three M Project was conceived and developed together with the New Museum in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, to jointly commission, exhibit, and acquire important works of contemporary art by artists whose work has not yet received significant recognition. All three museums share a collaborative vision and entrepreneurial spirit, and the belief that ambitious projects on a national scale can be produced through efficiency, knowledge, and resource sharing. The partnership, now in its second cycle, involves four new commissions by Jeremy Deller, Daria Martin, Mathias Poledna, and Urban China. The Three M Project is directed by leading curators from each museum: Laura Hoptman, Kraus Family Senior Curator, New Museum; Elizabeth Smith, James W. Alsdorf Chief Curator, with Dominic Molon, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Ali Subotnik, Curator, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

SUPPORT

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