

# RE- ENACTMENTS

## STUDY GUIDE

SECONDARY LEVEL

# RE-ENACTMENTS

## FRANCIS ALÿS

A re-enactment is a repeat performance of a specific event. It is implied that the event has already happened before, in some form or another. There are many possible reasons for this repetition—we sometimes repeat things to emphasize them, sometimes to bring back a specific feeling or experience, or even sometimes to arrive at a different result. Of course, the question is this: do things ever *really* repeat? Even if one performs a specific action for a second time, is it not already different, a completely independent event from the first time? And if the re-enactment is different from the original—then what kind of purpose does a re-enactment actually serve?

Here, Francis Alÿs shows two videos of him walking around Mexico City with a purchased gun in his hand. His subsequent arrest as a consequence of the action and his release has been documented and re-enacted. The two videos make up the documentation of the actual event and the re-enactment.



### PRE-VISIT

- Divide the class into groups to discuss incidences when they have done a re-enactment or was an audience for a re-enactment. Discussion can look into
  - What was re-enacted and for whom
  - Scale of the re-enactment
  - Purpose for the re-enactment
  - Manner and means of doing the re-enactment
  - Effect on the audience
- Have each group share their findings, compare and contrast these findings and come up with a group definition of re-enactments.
- From among the incidences of re-enactments shared, each group will choose one to present/re-enact to the rest of the class at a later date. If there are groups that re-enacted the same incident, have the students compare and contrast the re-enactments. Have them discuss the challenges and rewards of doing a re-enactment.

### VISIT

#### EXPLORE THE EXHIBIT

View the exhibit/two videos.

The walk that Alys does is a negation of “productive” action, of rational decision making. But while walking may be seen as nothing, the act of walking with a gun in the streets of Mexico is commentary on that society at that time -- the violence, corruption, etc. Take note of the time line in both videos and discuss the implication of the duration of the events.

You can use the following as guide questions for the students:

- Are there differences in the two videos? What are these?
- How do the differences strengthen or weaken the idea of re-enactment?
- What was the effect on the viewers of having the two videos play simultaneously, with one being marked re-enactment?
- The artist stated that this work demonstrates “how media can distort and dramatize the immediate reality of a moment.” Look at the two videos to determine the distortions and dramatizations, and how these were accomplished and their effects on the viewers.
- The setting is Mexico City in 2001. Would it have been possible to do the actual event and/or its re-enactment in an earlier or later period in Mexico? In another place? Why?

### POST-VISIT

Originally from Belgium, Alys moved to Mexico City. “It has often been noted that the poverty of means of Alys’s practice is particularly suited to the Latin American milieu in which he has largely worked,” wrote James Meyer. Have a look at Alys’ other works and see what is meant by “poverty of means” and whether or not the assertion of suitability of his work in Mexico is true or not. Why or why not?

Alys, along with Christian Philipp Müller and Renée Green “inscribed the mobility of the artist at the center of their practices.” Discuss the idea of artists’ mobility in terms of Alys’ walk as well as the contemporary art scene with the availability of residencies, globalization, etc.

# DEMONSTRATIVE FIGURES

ERICK BELTRÀN



Dance is one of the many forms of art, prioritizing the ability of the human body to perform various movements. While dance is primarily a physical activity, as a form of art, its power lies in its ability to express via movements of the body, its capacity to tell stories or visualize certain emotions. Dance becomes a form of communication, and those privy to its language become part of a community.

Apart from the capacity to build certain communities, dance can establish cultures, locations, or even histories. Here, Erick Beltràn gives us a view of the history of the dance called Sarabande, “from its unclear origin in Spain, to its revitalization as sexual Caribbean dance eventually taken as symbol of independence and revolt to its reintroduction to Europe by [the] Scottish (because of this very reason: political charge), to its domestication by French Court (Louis XIV).”

## PRE-VISIT

Look into the history of the sarabande, how it moved from Mexico to Spain, Italy and France. What made the movement of the dance possible from one country to another possible? Was the movement smooth? Why? Would there have been other directions the sarabande could have gone? Why?

## VISIT

Focus on having the students interpret the graphics or movements seen and let them jot down their ideas and answers. Divide the class into groups and let each group dance and interpret the work; allow them to follow the symbols and lines. After all the performances, you or a dancer can critique their performance.

Show them an example of a dance notation and ask the students to look into the ff: implication of the size of the stickers, the color of the stickers, where the stickers are located in the gallery, the positioning of the dance notations/instructions. Discuss the idea of interventions, how they appear in art and their function.

## POST-VISIT

Symbols evolve. Discuss the dance notations in terms of their evolution. What were the influence on the past and present form of the notations? What form do you think the future notations will take? Why?

The artist is interested in how images and icons organize and convey information. The class can be divided into groups — one group looking into branding, another on image fusion techniques, etc. The similarities and differences in terms of input and output, rationale, effect etc. can be discussed.

# THERE IS NO THERE

SILVANA MANGANO  
AND GABRIELLA MANGANO

Silvana and Gabriella Mangano usually use their bodies in their practice but in this piece, they collaborated with actors/dancers. A 10 minute looped video with sound plays in conjunction with a live performance. The gestures are taken from images in newspapers, and the performers' movement within the space helps create the sculptural aspect of the work.



## PRE-VISIT

Discuss the living newspaper, with particular focus given to the variety of devices used to present the current events/issues. Do the devices enhance or distract from the message? How? Why? Show the different communication models and discuss the living newspaper in this context. You can also discuss agitprop and propaganda and the different form it takes. Are living newspapers still done today? Where? How? Why?

## VISIT

### Performance Schedule

Tuesdays-Saturdays, 11am and 4pm  
Sundays, 11am

Compare and contrast the performance depicted in the video and the live performance. Note the different elements of the performance including costume, space, sound, etc. and how these affect the way the viewers experience the performance. How different or similar are these elements from that used in examples of living newspapers? Why do you think the artists chose these from among the elements of living newspapers? If some elements are absent or changed, would you still call them living newspapers? Why or why not?

## POST-VISIT

Discuss whether or not living newspapers are relevant in today's media landscape. Discuss the relation between art and politics, and political art.

The image of the body and/or gestures abound. Cite different contexts — such as social and political context — of the body's appearance and its manner of representation as well as absence or disappearance.

# INVISIBLE OBJECT

## MICHELLE LOPEZ

The title of the work is taken from Alberto Giacometti's *Hands Holding the Void (Invisible Object)*. In front of a two-way mirror and with eyes closed, persons describe — through words and gestures — an object they cannot name or understand that appeared to them in a dream.



### PRE-VISIT

Have them list down objects that they have lost and never recovered.  
Ask how they are able to remember what objects were lost.

### VISIT

The artist wrote

*There are a few modalities that operate in my process of late: one involves the material of light, one considers the residue of the absent body; the other builds the unknown, imagined space that brings forward an object.*

In the video, what and where is the space? What objects are put forward and how? How are the objects visually presented to the viewers? How are the objects visually presented to the people in the video if they have their eyes closed?

Is imagined space similar or different from a void? Look at the ways in which the two artists (Lopez and Giacometti) depict a void and discuss their effects on the viewer.

### POST-VISIT

Revisit essays on the use of void and/or space in art.  
Show examples from different cultures of these uses of void and/or space.  
How do these work to bring the object to fore?

# THE THOUGHT LEADER

## LIZ MAGIC LASER



When prominent individuals give talks or speeches, the usual configuration we have in mind is that of the speaker orating in front, exerting authority over a sea of audience members who nod silently in approval. This format allows for a specific flow of power to happen—since the speaker is the center of attention, he or she controls the whole room. Everyone is hanging on to the speaker’s every word, thereby giving the words more value. If somebody other than the speaker was to interrupt, or cause a commotion, there is even a possibility that enforcers (in the form of guards, or other audience members) will move to subdue the offender. If an audience member were to oppose the speaker’s thoughts, even in the form of a whisper to the person sitting beside him/her, that opposition is weak. The speaker is a person of power.

In Liz Magic Laser’s *The Thought Leader*, a 10-year old delivers a talk in the usual TED talk stage and format, borrowing the speech content from Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *Notes From the Underground* (1864). The TED talk format has gained traction in recent years, being a vehicle of communicating “big” ideas to huge groups of people, making it easier to understand.

## PRE-VISIT

### Dostoyevsky and Freewill

Watch a video about Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s “Notes from Underground:”

[“Notes from Underground \(Dostoyevsky\) – Thug Notes Summary and Analysis”](#)

The first part of the novella is a monologue. There are two types of monologues and have the students distinguish which parts of the monologue they are hearing are active or narrative monologues. Have them transform the narrative monologues to active monologues and vice-versa.

## VISIT

### Explore the Exhibit

List down the ways in which the performance conforms to TED Talks and the ways in which it differs.

### Share Your Thoughts

- In groups, let the students share their answers about the 5 points they find interesting or have learned. Include also in the discussion the following questions:
  - In the video, what is the main difference between the person delivering the talk and the crowd listening to the talk?
  - Put yourself in the shoes of an audience member. How does it feel to listen to this talk?
  - Observe carefully the various expressions of the audience members—what do you notice?
  - In the last part of the video, there is an attempt at audience participation. How does this make you feel? Have you ever felt similarly before?
- Have a sharing of your expectations regarding the exhibit. Were your expectations met? Were you surprised of what you saw? Why or why not?
- Let the students jot down their answers during the discussions.

### What is a TED Talk?

Watch videos of TED Talks. From this, have a class discussion evolving around these questions:

- What is a TED Talk?
- What are the topics in a TED Talk?
- How do you feel when listening to the talk?
  - Do you feel empowered? Motivated?
  - Do you feel enlightened? Interested in the topic?
  - Do you feel neutral or passive?
  - Do you feel uninterested? Exasperated?
- Why do you feel this way?

## POST-VISIT

### Make Your Own TED Talk

- In groups, create your own piece/rendition of Dostoyevsky’s “Notes from Underground”, or you can choose another literary piece which would create a disjunct similar to the “Notes from the Underground” You can also come up with your own title for the TED Talk. In writing the piece, ponder on these questions:
  - What is freewill?
  - Do you think that man has applied his/her own freewill in the society?
  - Without freewill, what do you think will happen to man? How will he/she live his/her life?
  - What will happen if man practices his/her freewill? What kind of life will he/she lead?
  - How can an individual apply his/her freewill in society?
- Perform your TED Talk. For every group, let the class give their comments regarding the ideas presented and explored in the TED Talk. Let them share their new learnings as well

# RE- ENACTMENTS

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## SUPPORTED BY

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BOOK STORE **BLACK MARIA PICTURES**

## SPECIAL THANKS

### PERFORMERS

Abbey Batocabe  
Natasha Cabrera  
Cori Francesca Co  
Mia Fortugaleza  
Carissa Laurel  
Venus Mar  
Jezi Matias  
Michelangelo Miccolis  
Paul Natividad  
Amihan Ceres Ruiz  
Mita Santiago  
Eira Joanne Tangalin  
Hayme Zulaybar

### INTERNS / VOLUNTEERS

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JC Barcelon  
Rowshan Begum  
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Veronica Bernardo  
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Alessa T. Salindato  
Erico Sy  
Paolo Tiausas  
Frances Nicole Villanueva  
Emmanuel Zorilla

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Bon Corachea

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## MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday to Saturday  
Sunday

10.00am - 6.00pm  
10.00am - 2.00pm

## MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND DESIGN

G/F De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde SDA Campus  
Dominga St., Malate, Manila, Philippines

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