

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pulitzer Presents *Assembly Required*

Exhibition of Works by Eight Artists Who Engage Viewers as Co-Creators

On View Mar 4–July 31, 2022; Pulitzer is only venue

“Every possible happening is there in potential, ready to be realized in the act. Then for the first time, anyone is fit for the act of creating.”

Lygia Clark



Lygia Pape, *Divisor*, 1968

ST. LOUIS, MO, UPDATED MAY 6, 2022—

The Pulitzer Arts Foundation presents *Assembly Required*, an exhibition of work by eight artists who invite the public to shape and co-produce their artworks. The artists—Francis Alÿs, Rasheed Araeen, Siah Armajani, Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, Yoko Ono, Lygia Pape, and Franz Erhard Walther—were selected for their shared belief in public action and its role in transforming society. Taken as a whole, the work in *Assembly Required* poses vital questions

about how art enables us to imagine new ways of being in the world.

On view from **March 4 through July 31, 2022**, *Assembly Required* has been curated by Pulitzer Arts Foundation Curator Stephanie Weissberg.

Pulitzer Executive Director Cara Starke notes, “Throughout the run of *Assembly Required*, the Pulitzer galleries will serve as a space for social engagement and communication and a place in which to consider civic life—a particularly salient topic today—as visitors interact directly with the artworks and with each other. We look forward to seeing our visitors reflect on how art and artmaking can change our lives.”

Exhibition Overview

Created between the 1960s and the present, the artworks in *Assembly Required* respond to distinct social and political moments and issues, from the unrest in the United States during the Vietnam War to Peru's military dictatorship in the 1990s, and more. Each artist offers unique perspectives on social change, addressing the need for optimism and hope in the face of global tensions.

Assembly Required opens with Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit* (1964), a book proposing 151 simple instructions, or "scores," for performing an artwork (e.g., *Watch snow fall until dinner time*), each on a single page. The exhibition will include 100 pages of the book, arrayed in a single row across the gallery walls. Additionally, the Pulitzer will realize one of the scores, *Painting to be Stepped On*, which will be placed on the floor across from the building's entryway so that visitors may engage with the work when they enter the museum by stepping on or over it. This will set the tone of the exhibition as a space to think outside of expected behavior at museums, such as not touching the art, but rather introducing a sense of playfulness and creativity—and touch—while also hinting at the subversive.

The exhibition continues in the museum's spacious main gallery with several works by German artist Franz Erhard Walther, including one of his most well known bodies of work: *First Work Set* (1963-1969), or *Erst Werksatz*. Having lived through the Second World War as a child, Walther was haunted by images of the Holocaust. He began making art during the post-War reconstruction years, viewing the human connections made through art as among the keys to resisting or changing society. The multi-part *Werksatz*, on view here, is radical in its emphasis on process over product, evident in the hands-on role played by the public, which manipulates the work by performing such mundane actions as folding, dropping, and measuring the fabric elements of which the work is composed. Together, the participants and their work serve as an indication of the importance of coordination and communication to realizing larger goals.



Franz Erhard Walther, *Vier Koerpergewichte* (counterbalancing body weights) *Single Element No. 42 of 1. Werksatz*, 1968

The final gallery on this floor contains a single work by the late Iranian-born/Minneapolis-based Siah Armajani, who is best known for his contributions to public sculpture. His works blend sculpture, architecture, and sites for community, such as bridges, gazebos, and reading rooms. The latter are designed to provide spaces for people to come together around a set of ideas, and to engage in reflection or discussion. His *Alfred Whitehead Reading Room*, on view in the exhibition, is dedicated to the English philosopher who believed that "all of our choices and actions have consequences for the world around us." Armajani's *Reading Room*, which includes a number of Whitehead's writings, provides spaces for conversation and reflection related to the philosopher and his ideas.

The museum's lower galleries include works of the Brazilian Neo-concretist movement. Born in the late 1950s, Neo-concretism sought to dissolve the boundaries between art and audience—treating the public as active participants rather than viewers—and became increasingly political as the military dictatorship took hold in Brazil beginning in 1964. *Penetrável Macaléia* (1978), is among Neo-concretist artist Hélio Oiticica's experiential sculptures, many of which include doors, sliding panels, and other building components. With its yellow mesh walls and its sand and plants, *Penetrável Macaléia*—which the public is invited to enter—alludes to both Brazil's rich tropical plant life and its *favelas*, densely-populated neighborhoods that originally began as makeshift settlements for socially and economically marginalized people.



Hélio Oiticica, *Penetrável Macaléia*, 1978

Other Neo-concretists represented include Lygia Clark, with a number of works. These include her *bichos* (*critters* or *creatures*)—table-top sculptures that can be re-formed into countless reconfigurations, thereby transforming the active viewer into a co-creator—and her “dialogue goggles,” which can be worn by one person or two, and which contain a series of lenses that are mirrored on one side, complicating the gaze, among other works.

Lygia Pape was another co-founder of Neo-concretism, along with Clark. Her 1959 *Book of Creation*, comprises 16 pages that use abstract forms to tell the story of the origin of the world. The pages are unbound, enabling viewers to handle the work, thereby formulating their own creation narrative. *Assembly Required* will also present documentation from one of Pape's most famous works. Titled *Divisor*, this performative work was staged in the streets of Rio in 1968, the year in which the dictatorship suppressed public assembly, introduced mass censorship, and suspended *habeas corpus*, making citizens vulnerable to arrest without cause. Pape invited dozens of local children to march through the streets under an enormous white sheet, which unified them as a single entity while still retaining their individualism. It was a highly radical gesture during a repressive regime.



Lygia Clark, *Bicho Pássaro do Espaço* (*Cripper Bird in Space*), 1960

Another of the museum's lower galleries will present a single work by Mexico-based, Belgian-born artist Francis Alÿs. Titled *When Faith Moves Mountains*, the work was conceived by Alÿs in the year 2000, following a trip to Lima, Peru, in the final days of the Fujimori dictatorship, a time of mass protests and clashes in the streets. Two years later, Alÿs returned to Peru to realize the work for the Lima Biennial.

When Faith Moves Mountains was a one-time performance for which Alÿs invited 500 volunteers from a local engineering school to work together to move a 1,500-foot-long sand dune in a desolate area on the outskirts of Lima. Over the course of the day, they shifted the dune by about 4 inches. The work—seen here through video projections and more than 100 drawings, paintings, and related ephemera—is at once a gesture of optimism, an allegory about the potential of the collective will, and a realist observation about the enormity of the challenges to achieving long-term change.



Francis Alÿs, *When Faith Moves Mountains (Cuando la fe mueve montañas)*, Lima, 2002

Finally, the Pulitzer’s outdoor courtyard will be the site of a work by Karachi-born, London-based artist Rasheed Araeen. While he is interested in the pared-down geometric forms of minimalism, Araeen also wants to democratize his work. *Assembly Required* will show *Zero to Infinity*, one of his breakthrough works, which was first conceived of in 1968. For each installation of the work, up to 100 open-frame wood boxes are laid out in a grid. Visitors are invited to disrupt the grid by reconfiguring the boxes into any formation they want. (These endless permutations inspired the title of the work.) Araeen has constructed 36 red boxes for the Pulitzer iteration of *Zero to Infinity*.

About the Pulitzer Arts Foundation

The Pulitzer Arts Foundation provides dynamic experiences with contemporary and historic art presented in dialogue with its celebrated building by Tadao Ando. Since its founding in 2001, the museum has organized a range of exhibitions featuring art from around the world, exploring a diverse array of ideas and inspiring new perspectives. Highlights have included the exhibitions *Hannah Wilke: Art for Life’s Sake* (2021-22); *Terry Adkins: Resounding* (2020-21); *Ruth Asawa: Life’s Work* (2018-19); *Blue Black*, a group show curated by artist Glenn Ligon (2017); *Medardo Rosso: Experiments in Light and Form* (2016-17); *raumlaborberlin: 4562 Enright Avenue* (2016); *Reflections of the Buddha* (2011-12); *Urban Alchemy / Gordon Matta-Clark* (2009-10); and *Brancusi and Serra in Dialogue* (2005). These exhibitions are complemented by programs that bring together leading figures from the fields of art, architecture, design, urban planning, and others. The Pulitzer is a place for contemplation and exchange that brings art and people together.

The Pulitzer campus is located in the Grand Center Arts District of St. Louis, Missouri, and includes the museum, the *Park-Like* garden, a tree grove, and the forthcoming Spring Church (opening 2022). The museum is open Thursday through Sunday, 10am–5pm, with evening hours until 8pm on Friday. Admission is free. For more information, visit pulitzerarts.org.

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Image Captions

Lygia Pape
Divisor, 1968
Performance at Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2010
© Projeto Lygia Pape
Courtesy Projeto Lygia Pape and Hauser & Wirth

Franz Erhard Walther
Vier Koerpergewichte (counterbalancing body weights) Single Element No. 42 of 1. Werksatz, 1968
Photograph courtesy of Galerie Jocelyn Wolff and Peter Freeman, Inc.

Hélio Oiticica
Penetrável Macaléia, 1978
Stainless steel, colored metal screens, sand, gravel, bricks, and plants
Cube: 86 1/2 x 86 1/2 x 86 1/2 inches (220 x 220 x 220 cm)
Overall install dimensions variable
Edition of 5
© Hélio Oiticica. Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Lygia Clark
Bicho Pássaro do Espaço (Critic Bird in Space), 1960
Aluminum
19 3/4 x 20 x 3/8 inches (50.2 x 50.8 x 1 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, by exchange, through a gift of Peggy Guggenheim. © O Mundo de Lygia Clark-
Associação Cultural, Rio de Janeiro
Photograph: Katherine Du Tiel

Francis Alÿs
When Faith Moves Mountains (Cuando la fe mueve montañas)
Lima, 2002
In collaboration with Cuauhtémoc Medina and Rafael Ortega
Video (36 minutes) and photographic documentation of an action, 'making of' video (15 minutes)
© Francis Alÿs
Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner