

For Immediate Release

**“CLAPPING WITH STONES: ART AND ACTS OF RESISTANCE”
ORGANIZED BY GUEST CURATOR SARA RAZA
OPENS AT THE RUBIN MUSEUM, AUGUST 16**

Featuring works by Lida Abdul; Kader Attia; Nadia Kaabi-Linke; Naiza Khan; Kimsooja; Pallavi Paul; Shahpour Pouyan; Ibrahim Quraishi; Nari Ward; and Hank Willis Thomas



Press Preview: August 15, 9:30–11:00 AM
Public Opening: August 16, 6:00–11:00 PM
For more information: press@rubinmuseum.org

July 9, 2019, New York, NY — This August the **Rubin Museum of Art** is pleased to present the third exhibition in its Year of Power programming, **“Clapping with Stones: Art and Acts of Resistance.”** Organized by guest curator Sara Raza, the exhibition brings together 10 contemporary artists living and working in the United States and internationally whose works poetically employ non-conformity and resistance as tools to question and upend power in society. Using a range of media — including installation, painting, photography, sculpture, video, and textile — the artists confront history, identity, heritage, and ways of understanding the world at a time when truth is censored, borders reconfigured, mobility impeded, and civil liberties challenged. Bringing together myriad voices, the exhibition presents a meditation on the spirit of defiance expressed through art. “Clapping with Stones: Art and Acts of Resistance” will be on view from August 16, 2019, to January 6, 2020, and will feature works by Lida Abdul, Kader Attia, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Naiza Khan, Kimsooja, Pallavi Paul, Shahpour Pouyan, Ibrahim Quraishi, Nari Ward, and Hank Willis Thomas.

Installed on the sixth floor of the Museum, the exhibition unfolds around **Kimsooja’s** site-specific installation “Lotus: Zone of Zero” (2019). The large-scale display uses the historic

building's iconic circular architecture as a framework to suspend over 200 lotus lanterns from the Rubin's oculus in a configuration resembling a mandala. Ambient sounds combine Tibetan, Gregorian, and Islamic chants to create a meditative, harmonious environment that highlights the potential for coexistence at a time of chaos. Other works in the exhibition further engage with the Museum's unique spaces and highlight the interwoven relationships among history, objects, and cross-cultural movement, including **Nari Ward's** new sculptural installation of a period room featuring found furniture, which explores topics of race, migration, and the transatlantic slave trade. Also on view is a monumental three-panel gold-leaf-encased triptych by **Nadia Kaabi-Linke** that explores Germany's fraught past through the familiar visual and architectural elements of a Christian altarpiece.

Other artworks incorporate performative gestures, such as **Lida Abdul's** powerful film "Clapping with Stones" (2005), from which the exhibition takes its name. The video examines the Taliban's destruction of the 6th-century Buddhas of Bamiyan in Central Afghanistan and contemplates the aftermath of the disaster. A ritualistic performance of a group of men clapping with stones takes center stage, signaling both an act of mourning and resistance. Similarly, **Ibrahim Quraishi's** installation "The Calling" (2008–2019) examines historical trauma and disaster through the documentation of an explosion of violins, objects with deep-seated historical and cultural significance.

Artist **Shahpour Pouyan** explores nationalism and belonging through an architecturally inspired sculptural installation of domes, drawing from his DIY DNA test and symbolizing his origins. In contrast, **Naiza Khan** explores the legacy of colonialism, history, and role of women in the Indian subcontinent as a starting point to consider beauty, violence, and power through galvanized steel sculptures. Both artists search for an understanding of identity when borders can be limits to the self. Other works in the exhibition draw from figures from the past and present. **Pallavi Paul's** 75-foot scroll documents the death of a former World War II Indian spy for the British government whose body was never found, questioning her death and the freedom of information. **Kader Attia's** video gives voice to the plight of migrant activists in Europe, highlighting the urgent issue of migration from Global South to the West, socioeconomics, and disparity. The theme of resistance is also echoed in **Hank Willis Thomas's** stainless steel sculpture that features two hands clashing in a moment of violence and refusal.

"The exhibition touches upon myriad artistic practices that explore non-conformity through a dynamic and non-didactic lens to create an inquiry into the manifestation of power that resides in art and society," says **Sara Raza**, the former Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Middle East and North Africa, who was invited by the Rubin in the fall of 2018 to organize this exhibition. "'Clapping with Stones: Art and Acts of Resistance' follows the artists' leads and articulates a wide variety of societal and political themes, unveiling power that exists in the unseen, hidden, and unrecorded. Through the work of these artists, the exhibition serves to explore power as both a collective and rejective force, and call to action." She adds, "Staging this exhibition at the Rubin Museum of Art creates a rare confluence of converging global ideas that are rooted in Eastern, Western, and diasporic philosophies and thinking."

A vibrant parallel to the exhibition is a series of programs in the Museum titled **The Power of Non-Conformity**, which includes films, talks, and tours through the end of the year.

About the Artists

Lida Abdul (b. 1973, Kabul, Afghanistan; lives and works in Kabul and Los Angeles) received

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a BA from California State University, Fullerton, and an MFA from the University of California, Irvine. Abdul fled Afghanistan as a child following the Soviet invasion in 1979. She lived as a refugee in India and Germany before immigrating to the United States. In her work Abdul grapples with themes of cultural identity, migration, and the processes of destruction and displacement that have marked Afghanistan's recent history. Abdul has had solo exhibitions at the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul (2007); Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art (2008); and Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois (2010). She has participated in select group exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum (2007) and Haifa Museum of Art, Israel (2009), as well as the 2005 and 2015 Venice Biennales.

Kader Attia (b. 1970, Dugny, France; lives and works in Berlin and Paris) has degrees from the École Supérieure des Arts Appliqués Duperré, Paris; Escola Massana d'Art i Disseny, Barcelona; and École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. Attia's experience living between two different continents, Europe and Africa, has profoundly influenced his work. He examines the long-term effects of Western colonization on non-Western cultures. Working across sculpture, installation, and film, Attia poetically investigates architecture, history, and migration. Solo exhibitions of his work have taken place at The Hayward Gallery, London (2019), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2017); Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois (2017); and Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2016). His art has also been featured in group exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2016); Tate Modern, London (2011); and Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012).

Nadia Kaabi-Linke (b.1978, Tunis, Tunisia; lives and works in Berlin and Kiev) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Tunis and the Sorbonne Université in Paris. Kaabi-Linke's practice engages with history and place. Her works create a dialogue between geographical and cultural identity. As a conceptual artist she works across multiple mediums within the paradigm of printmaking. Her practice is often in-situ or in direct reference to a specific place or site. She deals with topics of collective memory, perception, language, and symbolism. Kaabi-Linke has had solo exhibitions at the Centro de Arte Moderna José de Azeredo Perdigão, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (2014); The Mosaic Rooms, London (2014); Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, Texas, (2015); and Kunstmuseum Bonn (2017). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (2014), and Marta Herford, Museum für Kunst, Design und Architektur, Herford, Germany (2016).

Naiza Khan (b. 1968, Pakistan; lives and works in London and Karachi) trained at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, University of Oxford, and the Wimbledon College of Arts, London. She is currently an MA candidate at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths College, London. Khan co-founded the Vasl Artists' Collective, Karachi, in 2000 as part of the Triangle Network of workshops. Khan's work comments on the political and social facets of everyday life in Pakistan. Using painting, sculpture, wall drawings, performance, and video, she navigates personal and political spaces through meditations on the female body. In 2013 Khan had her first major retrospective at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. That year she received the Prince Claus Award for her initiatives in art and culture in Pakistan. Her work has been widely exhibited internationally including at the Lahore Biennale 01 (2018), Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2016), and Shanghai Biennale (2012). This year Khan represents Pakistan in its inaugural pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Kimsooja (b. 1957, Daegu, South Korea; lives and works in New York and Seoul) earned a BFA and MA from Hongik University, Seoul. Kimsooja is a conceptual artist whose multidisciplinary practice includes video, sculpture, performance, photography, light, sound, and installation. Her work is grounded in a rigorous formal approach and references such universal themes as gender, displacement, migration, and transculturalism. She articulates the meditative qualities of the condition of humanity, from the banal to the transcendent, based on her non-violence and non-making principles. Kimsooja has exhibited in major museums and institutions around the world, including the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts (2019); Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2018–2019); Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (2018); Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (2017); National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul (2016); Centre Pompidou-Metz (2015); and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2015). Kimsooja represented Korea at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013) and the 24th São Paulo Biennale (1998) and participated in Kassel Documenta 14: ANTIDORON – The EMST Collection (2017).

Pallavi Paul (b.1986, New Delhi, India; lives and works in New Delhi) is currently a PhD candidate at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Paul works with video, performance, and installation. Her practice centers around a poetic exploration of cultural histories, questioning the boundaries of speculation and fact. Paul's fascination with the philosophical concept of time manifests in her bodies of work that contemplate the idea of the archive. Paul has been included in many group exhibitions and screenings at places such as Tate Modern, London (2013); AV Festival, New Castle (2018, 2016); Beirut Art Centre, Lebanon (2018); and Contour Biennale, Mechelen (2017).

Shahpour Pouyan (b. 1979, Isfahan, Iran; lives and works in New York) has an MFA from Pratt Institute, New York, and an MFA from the Tehran University of Art. Pouyan works across painting, sculpture, and installation. As part of his practice he studies and reinterprets iconic cultural emblems, such as architecture, in order to reexamine its cultural significance and inherent power dynamics. His work has been presented in a solo exhibition at the Barbara Walters Gallery at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York (2019) and in group exhibitions in international institutions including Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (2016, 2019); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2018); British Museum, London (2017); Pera Museum, Istanbul (2016); and Grey Art Gallery, New York (2016). He has participated in the Lahore Biennale (2018); Beijing Biennale (2017); Yinchuan Biennale (2016); and Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2014).

Ibrahim Quraishi (b. 1973, Nairobi, Kenya; lives and works in Amsterdam and Berlin) earned a BA from Columbia University, New York, and an MA from Universiteit Utrecht, Utrecht. Quraishi works across different mediums including photography, photo painting, video, film, and performance installation. His practice challenges preconceived perceptions of cultural identity through visualizations of performativity and the human body. He often examines the intersections of taboo binaries such as religion and violence. Quraishi has had solo exhibitions around the globe including at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, Houston (2015); National Museum of Singapore (2013); and Centraal Museum, Utrecht (2012). He has participated in select group exhibitions at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2012–2013); Documenta 14, Kassel (2017); Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City (2017); Savvy Contemporary Berlin (2012); Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (2018–2019); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2008); and Queens Museum, New York (2005). Quraishi is represented by Galerie Crone, Berlin, and Lumen Travo Gallery, Amsterdam.

Nari Ward (b. 1963, St. Andrew, Jamaica; lives and works in New York) received a BA from the City University of New York, Hunter College, and an MFA from the City University of New York, Brooklyn College. Ward is known for sculptural installations that use found materials from his Harlem neighborhood. He repurposes objects such as baby strollers, shopping carts, shoelaces, and other discarded materials into complex, open-ended, site-specific installations. Though these works he confronts the social and political issues of race, poverty, and consumer culture. Solo exhibitions of his work have taken place at the New Museum, New York (2019); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2017); Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia (2016); Pérez Art Museum Miami (2015); Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams (2011); and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2002). He has participated in group exhibitions at institutions such as The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC (2019); Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City (2018); El Museo del Barrio, New York (2017); and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2015).

Hank Willis Thomas (b. 1976, Plainfield, New Jersey; lives and works in New York) earned his BFA from New York University and an MA and MFA from California College of the Arts. He received honorary doctorates from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, and the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, Portland, Maine. Thomas is a conceptual artist who works primarily with themes related to perspective identity, commodity, media, and popular culture. His collaborative projects include *Question Bridge: Black Males, In Search of the Truth (The Truth Booth)*; *Writing on the Wall*; and *For Freedoms*, the first artist-run initiative for art and civic engagement. In 2017, *For Freedoms* was awarded the ICP Infinity Award for New Media and Online Platform. Thomas is a recipient of the Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship (2019), the Guggenheim Fellowship (2018), the AIMIA | AGO Photography Prize (2017), and the Soros Equality Fellowship (2017). He is a member of the New York City Public Design Commission.

About Sara Raza

Sara Raza is New York-based writer and curator specializing in contemporary global art practices. In 2016 she won the ArtTable New Leadership Award for Women in the Arts. She was also recently the Guggenheim UBS MAP curator for the Middle East and North Africa, and curated *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (2016), which travelled to the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan (2018). Raza has curated exhibitions and projects for international biennials, festivals, and museums, including Mathaf: Modern Arab Art Museum, Doha, Qatar; the MacKenzie Art Gallery, Saskatchewan, Canada; the Tashkent Biennale, Uzbekistan; *Rhizoma (Generation in Waiting)*, Saudi Pavilion, the 55th Venice Biennale (2013); and the Baku Public Art Festival, Azerbaijan (2015). In addition, she has organized a number of exhibitions for Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE, where she served as associate curator from 2011 to 2014. Formerly, she was the head of education at YARAT, Baku, Azerbaijan; founding curator at Alaan Art Space, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and curator of public programs at Tate Modern, London. Raza writes for numerous publications, has contributed to artist books, and is the long-standing West and Central Asia editor for *ArtAsiaPacific*.

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About the Rubin Museum of Art

The Rubin Museum of Art is an arts and cultural hub in New York City's vibrant Chelsea neighborhood that inspires visitors to make connections between contemporary life and the art and ideas of the Himalayas and neighboring regions. The Rubin encourages personal discoveries through its diverse array of thought-provoking exhibitions and programs, including films, concerts, and onstage conversations, as well as immersive experiences that spark new ways of seeing the world. Emphasizing cross-cultural connections, the Rubin is a space to contemplate ideas that extend across history and span human cultures.

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Lida Abdul (b. 1973, Kabul, Afghanistan; lives and works in Kabul and Los Angeles); still of *Clapping With Stones*; 2005; 16 mm film transferred to DVD; 5 min.; image courtesy of the artist and Giorgio Persano Gallery

Naiza Khan (b. 1968, Bahawalpur, Pakistan; lives and works in London and Karachi); *The Robe*; 2008; galvanized steel and leather; 39¼ x 21¼ x 15 in. (100 x 55 x 38 cm); photograph by Mahmood Ali and Sohail Abdullah; image courtesy of Karen Stone Talwar