

Maja Bekan: Hold It Together. (We Have Each Other)

A choreography for human connection in a time of separation

April 13–July 30, 2021

Closing Event:
Friday, July 30, 2021
6–7pm EDT

Gallery Hours:
By appointment on
Tuesday–Thursday
12–5pm

The International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) announces *Maja Bekan: Hold It Together. (We Have Each Other)*, a solo exhibition conceived by ISCP artist-in-residence Maja Bekan, concluding a year-long collaboration with New York City residents Pon-Pon Yeh, Mandy Morrison, Marie Christine, Juliana Cope, Cynthia Berkshire, Susan Hapgood, Alison Kuo, and many others.

As Bekan puts it, the exhibition itself “is an (art) work in process, it is a spatial proposal for a future event, a work in a state of waiting.” Thus, the gallery is presented as a combination of performance stage, recording studio, and rehearsal space for visitors to contemplate Bekan’s choreography for human connection in a time of separation. The artist’s collaborators and audience are implicated in her call to prepare “to assemble again and *exercise togetherness*.”

Bekan’s sphere of intervention is often inspired by her own biography, art institutions, and the relationships she forms while doing artwork through collective activities. She is interested in the transformative force of the performance—the performance not bound as a category of temporality and disappearance, but seen as a space of becoming, not only understood as an aesthetic category, but also as a mode of political power. The protagonists of Bekan’s work are often women: artists, activists, students, retirees, and people seeking a place for themselves in difficult circumstances.

The work made for this exhibition was forced by the safety restrictions of the pandemic into an online platform. It became a bi-weekly “happening” of sorts that prompted more questions than answers, questions like, “How can we be collective if we are all in (Zoom) squares of our own? How do we mobilize (imposed) slowness? How do we create a collective intimacy without possibility to touch, to move, or to breathe in the same/shared space? What friendships do we need now and how do we become friends online? Who among us can actually slow down and who is asked to accelerate 24/7?”



Maja Bekan, #1 *Exercise in Lying Low*, 2020. Photo by Boris Krga. Courtesy of the artist



Maja Bekan, *Rehearsing Togetherness: Troublemakers*, 2020-2021, Zoom assembly with Pon-Pon Yeh, Mandy Morrison, Marie Christine, Juliana Cope, and Cynthia Berkshire. Courtesy of the artist

For more information
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A printed take-away with an essay by Thyrza Goodeve will be available in the gallery in May, 2021.

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Maja Bekan is currently an artist-in-residence at ISCP sponsored by the Mondriaan Fund. She is a co-founder and developer of the Rotterdam based artists’ initiative ADA, Area for Debate and Art. In 2008 she began the long-term research project *P for Performance*, as a method to initiate situations, use performance as a both a tool to investigate collective intimacy, and a stage for knowledge production. Bekan has exhibited work at Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw; Kunsthaus Graz; Casco Art Institute, Utrecht; Artikum, Rovaniemi; IZOLYATSIYA, Kyiv; The Living Art Museum, Reykjavík; SMBA Amsterdam; Witte de With, Rotterdam; The Art Gallery, KCB, Belgrade; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and Institute for Provocation, Beijing, among others.

This exhibition is coordinated by Alison Kuo, ISCP Arts Residency Manager, with exhibition assistant coordinator, Daniela Chaparro.

Special thanks to Vesna Bijeljic, Kari Conte, Juliana Cope, Moko Fukuyama, Gunndís Ýr Finnbogadóttir, Stine Hebert, Boris Krga, Frances Maggio, Angela Serino, and all the participants of the *P for Performance* reading group.

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About ISCP:

Founded in 1994, ISCP is the fourth-largest visual arts residency program in the world and a global leader in the field of visual arts residency programs. ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences. Over 1,500 artists and curators from more than 85 countries, including the United States have undertaken residencies at ISCP.

ISCP does not discriminate on the basis of disability in terms of admission, access, or employment. ISCP programs and activities are accessible to visitors with disabilities. Accommodations are made to the best of the institution's ability, depending on individual visitors' needs. To request accommodations, please contact info@iscp-nyc.org or call 718-387-2900.

