

PRESS RELEASE***acts of memory 2005-2010***

solo, collective and multi-lingual recitations from memory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

A DVD published by the Live Art Development Agency. £10.

DVD Launch

Friday 24 June 2011, 6.30–8.30pm

Beaconsfield, 22 Newport Street, London SE11 6AY

acts of memory 2005-2010 presents material from solo and collective recitations from memory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by Monica Ross and co-reciters. The DVD traces the evolution of Ross's solo act *rightsrepeated—an act of memory* at Beaconsfield in 2005 through performances 01-30 of the extensive, collaborative work *Anniversary—an act of memory: solo, collective and multi-lingual recitations from memory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

A performance series in 60 acts, *Anniversary—an act of memory* was first performed by Ross to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Declaration in 2008 and has since taken place in contexts as disparate as Legal Chambers, The House of Commons, Brighton seafront, Kings College Chapel, a private flat, Mikhail Karikis's exploded opera, *Xenon*, and with 200 co-reciters from different communities and professions memorising and publicly reciting articles in over 30 languages.

This extraordinary performance series retains its vitality because each recitation is uniquely shaped by the producers and co-reciters who deliver it. The text and its aspirations remain the same, while each performance becomes specific to its context and community, nuanced, inflected and impassioned by the individuals who commit themselves to recite the Articles of the Declaration from memory.

The artist and co-reciters draw on oral traditions where memory and spoken repetition produce an embodied form of reproduction which is at once an act of witness and one of taking responsibility for the transmission of knowledge. The emphasis is not on perfect recall but on the attempt to remember, and the difficulty of trying to fulfill the Declaration's call to keep it 'constantly in mind' and especially to be able to voice or act on it when under pressure.

The release of the ***acts of memory 2005-2010*** DVD, celebrates a new phase in the series and the outset of the UK Tour 2011-2013 which takes *Acts 31-60* to new contexts across the UK.

www.actsofmemory.net

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***Anniversary—an act of memory* is endorsed by Amnesty International UK and the British Institute of Human Rights.**

Editors Notes:

acts of memory 2005-2010 (DVD, 2011). Published by Live Art Development Agency as part of their DVDs on-demand series, exclusively available through the online shop Unbound. **Unbound** is the Live Art Development Agency's online shop for Live Art books, DVDs and limited edition artworks. Unbound specialises in publications and artefacts related to groundbreaking and risk-taking contemporary art practices. Here you will find essential materials on all things live: from experimental theatre to body art, from the history of performance art to performance theory, from digital performance to art activism. www.thisisunbound.co.uk / www.thisisliveart.co.uk
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The **act of memory** recitations began as a response to the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes by police in London in July 2005; Ross challenged herself to learn the UDHR by heart and first attempted to publicly recite it from memory in the performance *rightsrepeated—an act of memory* at Beaconsfield, London 2005. *rightsrepeated* was subsequently presented by Live Art Development Agency in *Performing Rights*, London 2006 and the *National Review of Live Art*, Glasgow 2008.

The **Anniversary—an act of memory series** launched with a solo recitation by Ross during the British Library exhibition *Taking Liberties: The Struggle for Britain's Freedom and Rights* in December 2008 and her aim is to achieve a minimum of 60 solo, collective and multi-lingual recitations of the UDHR from memory with co-reciters from different communities, contexts and campaigns and to mark other anniversaries of importance for human rights and civil liberties. *Acts 01-30* were produced between 2008-2010 in collaboration with curators, activists, arts, educational, human rights and judicial organisations in the UK, Ireland and Germany, including solo recitations in Mikhail Karikis' *Xenon: an exploded opera* 2010 at Kings Place, London and Whitstable Biennale 2010 and the film *Xenon* 2011. More than 200 co-reciters have taken part in 30 languages.

Anniversary – an act of memory: UK Tour May 2011 - May 2013

The Launch of Brighton Festival 2011 celebrated Guest Director Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's pro-democracy leader, human rights advocate and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. For this event Ross performed an *act of memory* with the Festival Chorus singing *Sleep* by Eric Whitacre and conducted by John Hanson at the Brighton Dome. A major collective recitation for Brighton Festival 2011 launches the UK tour on 29 May (www.brightonfestival.org). Further Recitations are planned to take place at Lantern House, Ulverston, Crescent Arts, Scarborough and Wunderbar Festival, Newcastle & Gateshead 2011. For more info please contact producer@actsofmemory.net or go to www.actsofmemory.net

Anniversary—an act of memory UK Tour 2011 - 2013 is produced by Michelle Hirschhorn and funded by **Arts Council England**.

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 and is the world's most translated document, available in over 370 languages at www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Introduction.aspx. The *acts of memory* version replaces the generic male pronouns of the original with non gendered alternatives. A poster of this version is also available from Beaconsfield Editions www.beaconsfield.ltd.uk

Monica Ross produces drawings, performances, videos, text and multi-media works which often result from durational processes, sequential actions or events. Time-based in form and concern, her work addresses how we experience events in the present and the cultural transitions which transform them, or not, into memory and history. Her works have been presented in many exhibitions and contexts since the 1970s, when feminism and other movements for social, cultural and political change were formative in shaping her experimental and often collaborative art practice.