

Art in America

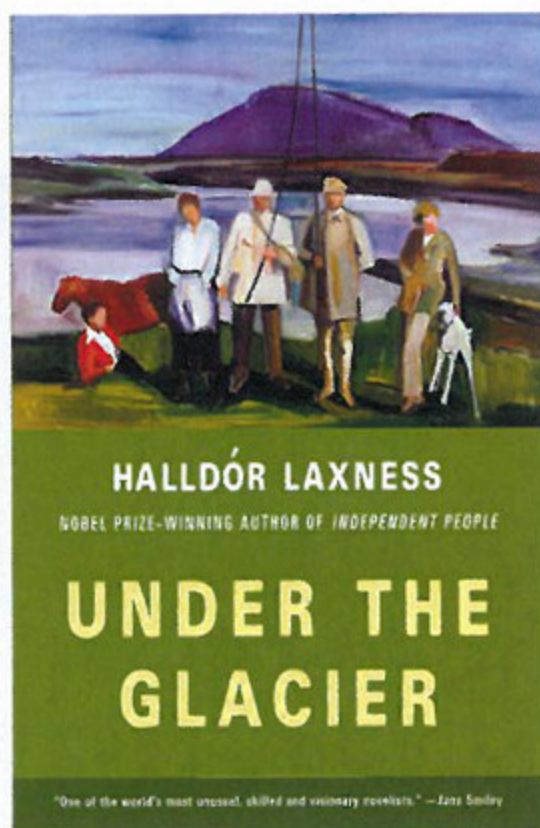


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SIGHTLINES

SAME COIN

Two films I've been thinking about since relocating to Southeast Asia are Tran Anh Hung's *The Scent of Green Papaya* and *Cyclo*. *Scent* deals with a relationship between a wealthy Vietnamese landowner and his domestic servant. It's romanticized but still based on class hierarchy. *Cyclo* addresses a mafia business in Saigon: bicycle taxis run by gangs. The two films convey contrasting views: *Scent* shows a formal society with its systems and rules. There's a beautiful house, a love story, an Asia of the past. *Cyclo* has a dark organizational structure and is definitely not romantic.



BOOK CLUB

When I work on projects I often ask my artists what they're reading, and that ends up being what I read. Joan Jonas turned me on to *Under the Glacier* by the Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness. The novel was an inspiration for her performance piece *Reanimations*. I'm currently reading *Opium City: The Making of Early Victorian Bombay* by Amar Farooqui, recommended by an urban-history colleague I was with on a recent trip to Mumbai. The book deals with trade routes, tea exports, cotton and opium imports, and the history of the East India Company.

NEW SOUNDS

When you arrive in a new country, after you unpack and put your books away, you still have to reconfigure your life. Here in Singapore, I don't have a TV. I have an iPhone and a speaker. When I was young I couldn't stand jazz. But now I search for online jazz stations, always finding new ones from various countries with differing interpretations of what jazz is.



View of Reinhard Mucha's installation "Frankfurter Block—Arbeiten am Hohlkasten 1981-2014."

STATION TO STATION

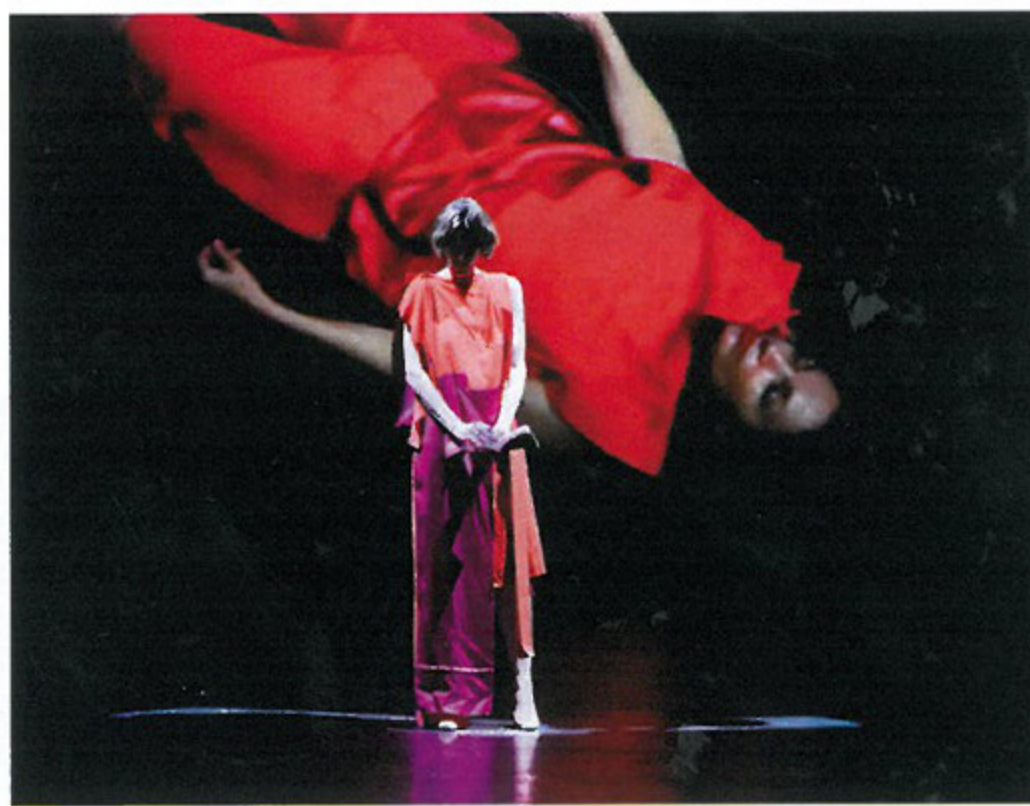
I was very impressed by Reinhard Mucha's exhibition "Frankfurter Block—Arbeiten am Hohlkasten 1981-2014," at Sprüth Magers's Berlin gallery. The title, so typical for Mucha, is hard to translate: it refers to work in an empty space or a void between the walls of an architectural site. Mucha often uses the theme of trains, incorporating train tracks or signs from stations as part of his installations. He constantly asks the viewer to reconsider what a museum or a display actually is. I've always wanted to work with him.



Ute Meta Bauer

The Singapore-based curator shares five recent insights with Chris Chang.

Ute Meta Bauer, founding director of the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), a research department of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, has been amazed by Joan Jonas for years. "She's completely different from her male counterparts. The men are often just looking for their next big career move. Joan is so rare; she just doesn't care about that!" Bauer, who used to be the director of the visual arts program at MIT, where Jonas is professor emerita, is co-organizing Jonas's installation in the U.S. pavilion at this year's Venice Biennale, May 9–Nov. 22. (The pavilion's other organizer is Paul Ha, director of the MIT List Visual Arts Center.) Since her arrival at CCA in 2013, Bauer, born in Germany, has organized several solo exhibitions by artists such as Yang Fudong and Simryn Gill (through June 14).



TO RETURN, AGAIN

I'm a child of French literature, and I often reread Marguerite Duras. I saw Korean artist Haegue Yang's stage adaptation of Duras's novella *Malady of Death* at Documenta 13. It starred Jeanne Balibar, daughter of Étienne Balibar, the French Marxist philosopher. Balibar played both the male and female roles, and she basically reads the whole book. I loved it.

Haegue Yang: *The Malady of Death—Monodrama with Jeanne Balibar*, 2012, performance, approx. 70 minutes.