

MEDIA RELEASE



ROYCE NG *THE SOMALI PEACE BAND*

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY AND MELBOURNE FESTIVAL

CURATORS: LOUISE NERI, ALEXIE GLASS-KANTOR AND PIP WALLIS
EXHIBITION DATES: 12 – 26 OCTOBER 2013
OPENING EVENT: SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER 2013, 2 – 4PM

Somali musician Abdi Mohamed Abdi spent sixteen years in a refugee camp in Kenya where he formed the Somali Peace Band with singer Daacad Rashid. Their music made them famous. Today Abdi lives free in Melbourne while Daacad lives in Nairobi, in constant fear of persecution while awaiting the outcome of his application for asylum in Australia.

In 2010, Chinese Australian artist Royce Ng saw Abdi perform in Melbourne and became involved in putting him back in touch with Daacad in Kenya, and re-recording the songs of the Somali Peace Band.

Gertrude Contemporary and Melbourne Festival present *The Somali Peace Band*, an immersive three-channel video installation, including interviews with Abdi and Daacad and recreations of their experiences. Using the poignant beauty of their music as a vehicle, *The Somali Peace Band* project questions the limits of activism and advocacy within the context of art and explores the various forms of 'the law' that bind individuals across history, cultures and geography.

The opening event will feature a performance by the Somali group AUSSOM BAND, and on Tuesday 22 October the Social Utopias and Social Agency Panel Discussion will feature Royce Ng, Curator and Melbourne Festival Creative Associate - Visual Arts Louise Neri, Academic and Curator Dr Vivian Gerrand, senior Somali community member Fuad Jama and Director of the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre Jana Favero.

During the festival the Front Gallery at Gertrude Contemporary will be converted into an open social space with events programmed by Nadia Faragaab, artist and Founding Director

of Burji Arts, The Somali Kitchen, Brother Sister Records and others. These programs will feature shared food, artist workshops, music recording, poetry readings, a guest curated video reel and an archive of Somali texts.

Public programs: for more details about the events mentioned above, please visit www.gertrude.org.au

Royce Ng is a Chinese-Australian artist currently based in Hong Kong. He makes site specific works which utilise digital media, performance and installation that borrow strategies and methodologies from anthropology and ethnomusicology to create highly collaborative projects that deal with the relationships between economics, politics, technology and aesthetics. Since graduating with a BFA from RMIT in Melbourne in 2010, he has exhibited his works and projects in various galleries and institutions in Australia, South Korea, Thailand, Japan, Africa and Europe. In 2012 Ng was included in the Gwangju Biennale and the Busan Biennale in South Korea. He is currently engaged in a project on the economic relationship between Asia and Africa with anthropologist Daisy Bisenieks for the Johann Jacobs Museum in Zurich, an institute for contemporary art and research focusing on transnational trade routes.

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