

04.24.05

**4PM-630PM**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LUNAR ECLIPSE:

**MEDITATION/MEDIATION PERFORMANCES**

A Project Conceived by Daniel Rothbart

The Roger Smith Lab Gallery is pleased to present the New York debut of Daniel Rothbart's interactive performance project "Meditation/Mediation" curated by Lisa Paul Streitfeld on Sunday, April 24. This event, the second in the rogersmitharts interdisciplinary performance series, commemorates an auspicious lunar eclipse delivering the resurrection of the divine feminine into the collective consciousness.

Fifteen metal vessels and a Striker will be installed in the gallery against a backdrop of Branchings mounted on the walls. Selected artists will interact with one or more of these ancient symbols for 3 to 5 minutes each. The collaborative ritual begins at 4:00 p.m. and ends at 6:30. Artist performers include: Max Blagg, Adrian Dannatt, Anthony Haden Guest, L. Brandon Krall, Abraham Lubelski, Francine Hunter McGivern, Larry Miller, Valery Oisteanu, Enrico Pedrini, John Perreault, Douglas Rosenberg, Bettina Sellmann and Martha Wilson.

Rothbart grew up in Eugene Oregon near the Pacific Coast where he was inspired by the evolution of trees shaped by the wind and adapted to the elements. After winning a Fulbright-Hayes Fellowship to Naples in 1990, he reflected on how the urban development of the city was a metaphor for the organic growth of a tree. His first exhibition, at a private Naples gallery, was an interactive installation of an invasive tree realized in various elements such as paper, metal and wood. At this time, he became interested in the tree as the central symbol of the Cabala, believed to contain divine emanations. He began to experiment with new materials, adding seedlings and creating duality between roots and branches through mirroring

In 1993, Rothbart returned to an earlier interest developed in art school: making ceramic tea bowls. He executed a series of eighteen vessels in bronze. Thus began the project "Semiotic Street Situations" (<http://www.semioticstreet.com>) in which he transformed the bowls into signifiers interacting with unpredictable forces in everyday environments such as public parks, open-air markets and city streets. This ongoing project was radically altered by the September 11 tragedy. The proximity with which Rothbart lived to the terrorism site radically altered his vision; he began to view his objects as begging bowls, reflecting the Buddhist value of non-attachment. Shortly after the attacks, Rothbart won an artist's residency at the La Napoule Art Foundation on the French Riviera. He carried the vessels around with him in a sack and photographed them in various locations.

On June 28, 2003 the first group collaboration of Meditation/Mediation took place on an ancient Etruscan site at the Fondazione Baruchello. The stage was set by YOKO ONO's IMAGINE PEACE prints pinned to the trees. Since then, the project has been performed by individuals in France, Italy, Israel, Mexico and the United States.

The lunar eclipse marks the first time that a performance with the vessels will accompany an exhibit of Branches. Twelve years of engaging the vessels in rituals was directed to the resurrection of the sacred feminine. In following the passage of the ancients, and the Renaissance, where Marsilio Ficino timed magical rituals to cosmological events, the lab experiment on the April 24 lunar eclipse combines the mystical power of the Yod (represented by Branches) with the symbols of masculine and feminine. The goal of this performance is to establish the entry of the *conjunctio* into the collective consciousness. C.G. Jung and Wolfgang Pauli believed this archetype, the *Hieros Gamos*, to be the 21st century icon establishing gender equality and integrating the opposites currently threatening the evolution of humanity.

*The Roger Smith Lab Gallery is a project based exhibition space located in one of the liveliest business sections of New York City. Sponsored by the Roger Smith Hotel, The Lab is a high traffic, fast paced, converted "storefront" that features conceptual work and provides a venue for experimental national and international artists and curators and their ideas. The Lab Gallery specializes in ten-day exhibitions. For more information, call 212-339-2092, or email [rogersmitharts@rogersmith.com](mailto:rogersmitharts@rogersmith.com). —Matthew Semler, Artistic Director. D. Dominick Lombardi, Curatorial Advisor.*