

Raqs Media Collective

The members of Raqs Media Collective (clockwise from top left: Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta) have been variously described as artists, media practitioners, curators, researchers, editors, and catalysts of cultural processes. Based in New Delhi, India, they cofounded, in 2000, Sarai, an interdisciplinary space for arts and technologies. Raqs is cocurating (with Adam Budak, Anselm Franke, and Hila Peleg) Manifesta 7, which will open in July.



From top: Chen Zhen, *Purification Room*, 2000, mixed media. Installation view, Kunsthalle Wien, 2007. Photo: Stephan Wyckoff. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, *The Muriel Lake Incident*, 1999, wood, steel, audio, and video, 72 1/2 x 90 1/4 x 62". View of Turin, Italy, and La Mole Antonelliana, 2005. Photo: AP/Massimo Pinca.



1 CHEN ZHEN (1955–2000) Whether investigating the density of a Chinese city, the flotsam and jetsam of the everyday, or the transparent fragility of the body, artist and visionary Chen Zhen—whose incandescent work features, among other items, bicycle tubing, glass bodily organs, giant chairs, red brooms, and strange mechanical wonders—reminds us of the simple fact that, at the end of the day, the work of art happens behind your eyes.

2 SUBARNAREKHA (THE GOLDEN LINE, 1962) Made by Bengali filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak, *Subarnarekha* ought to be a cult film but isn't. Echoes of myths resound through the deceptively simple story, set in small-town Bengal, of a brother and sister who take in an orphan uprooted by the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. *Subarnarekha* is a film about refugees, war, caste, love, and the desperation to survive. Melodrama, references to Sanskrit liturgical texts, a make-believe goddess heralding destruction in an abandoned World War II airfield, shadows of incest, and a troubling lack of resolution color this dark film about coming of age and the loss of innocence.

3 LA MOLE ANTONELLIANA, TURIN, ITALY Building, museum, and machine, the nearly 550-foot Mole Antonelliana was, when it was constructed by Alessandro Antonelli in 1863, the world's tallest brick structure. Today, it continues to sharpen the skyline of Turin with its pointed tower and embellished facade. Built, but never used, as a synagogue, the pagodalike structure, which now houses the Italian National Museum of Cinema, is more than just an architectural enigma. It is an eddy in the prehistory of postmodern architecture, tantalizing us with a different direction that the field could have taken, had it stayed tuned to the "fancy." And there are few experiences like the magic ride up in the building's glass-and-wrought-iron elevator—a long tracking shot through a galaxy of cinema history, from earth to heaven.

4 JANET CARDIFF AND GEORGE BURES MILLER, THE MURIEL LAKE INCIDENT, 1999 We trace the origins of our collaborative practice back to our days in filmmaking, and the gentle yet unabashed cinephilia of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller reminds us where some of our affections still lie. In this work, as you look into a miniature theater, you hear a woman whispering in your ear, making comments and narrating memories that seem entangled with the events onscreen. The effect is a delicate web of voyeurism, memory, curiosity, and pleasure.

5 THE MATTRESS FACTORY Cofounded in 1977, and still run, by Barbara Luderowski and Michael Olijnyk in a depressed Pittsburgh neighborhood, the Mattress Factory is part museum of contemporary art, part atelier for artists-in-residence. Its wonderfully hospitable and energetic production environment has strong connections to the city around it, so that artists' experiments and explorations are actively situated in a public context. A sparkingly intelligent museum that manages to remain human-scale.

6 GRAHAM HARWOOD, REHEARSAL OF MEMORY, 1995 This remarkable interactive CD-ROM, which conveys the inner lives of patients in an English mental hospital, is a searing exploration of homicide, madness, confinement, scars, and the surface of the body. Concerned with the mortal, mad, and corporeal, *Rehearsals of Memory* challenges those who would see only insubstantiality in "new media art," showing as it does the danger and dignity of blood, skin, and memory.

7 THE INVISIBLES A grand eschatological swashbuckler, this adult comic-book series, written by Grant Morrison and published in the second half of the 1990s by Vertigo, features a cast of anarchic superheroes who battle—using sex, magic, and the power of invisibility—against aliens conspiring for world domination. Here, refined *fin de siècle* paranoia gets an epic rerelease for the twenty-first century. A dense brew—rapture, revolution, and rage—with no added sugar or preservatives.

8 THE TRAVELS OF IBN BATTUTA This book is the dictated memoir of Ibn Battuta, a pioneering world traveler, adventurer, and chronicler of human foibles, who left his native Morocco in 1325 for a nearly thirty-year voyage across the Muslim world, including a sojourn in our city, Delhi. His vivid accounts of his epic journeys and his encounters with many peoples offer convincing evidence that no one has a monopoly on either malice or benevolence.

9 PAUL ERDŐS (1913–1996) A peripatetic Hungarian mathematician of Jewish descent, one of whose biographies is fittingly titled *The Man Who Loved Only Numbers*, Erdős believed in the social practice of mathematics and had intense collaborations with mathematicians from all over the world. The results are foundational to our understanding of how order, or a sense of patterning, emerges whenever multiplicity comes into play. The immense range of Erdős's collaborations led some of his colleagues to devise a whimsical tribute: the Erdős number. Mathematicians who collaborated with him have an Erdős number of 1, collaborators with collaborators 2, and so on. Nearly every active mathematician in the world has an Erdős number smaller than 8.

10 THE VOICES OF LOU REED, ASHWINI BHIDE-DESHPANDE, ANNA NETREBKO, JULIE LONDON, BJÖRK, RABBI SHERGILL, DAVID BYRNE, AND AMÁLIA Sounds that smell of coffee, rain, mulled wine, chocolate, snow, bread, moist leather, and sunshine. □



From top: Print by Léon Benett from 1878 woodcut depicting Ibn Battuta in Morocco. Photo: The Granger Collection. Graham Harwood, *Rehearsal of Memory* (detail), 1995, interactive program, dimensions variable. Panel from a page of *Counting to None* (*The Invisibles*, Vol. 5, Vertigo, 1999).

