

Press Release



Image: David Levine (American, born 1970). *Untitled*, 2018. Digital photograph, dimensions variable. Collection of the artist. © 2018 David Levine

Brooklyn Museum

David Levine's *Some of the People, All of the Time* Challenges the Meaning of a Crowd

Part of *Birds: A Festival Inspired by Aristophanes* produced by the Onassis Cultural Center New York

On view at the Brooklyn Museum, May 24–July 8, 2018

With his performative six-week installation at the Brooklyn Museum, artist David Levine asks: What does it mean to make an audience, a public, or a republic? In a free society, crowds matter—as citizens, as demonstrators, as social media followers. Recently, the legitimacy of certain public gatherings—in real life and online—has been called into question: bots on social media have skewed follower counts and undermined public opinion; accusations of “crisis acting” have discredited authentic political action; and “crowd-casting” agencies dot the landscape of protests, rallies, and demonstrations. These fabricated identities, alongside rhetorical invocations of “the fake,” have revealed a remarkable fragility in our democracy.

Levine explores the complexities of these fabricated identities in his new exhibition, *Some of the People, All of the Time*, on view at the Brooklyn Museum from May 24 to July 8. Levine bridges the worlds of contemporary art, performance, and theater with works that explore the nature of spectatorship, identity, and labor. In *Some of the People*, he weaves these elements together to examine the contemporary crowd, asking us to consider what is “real.”

The centerpiece of *Some of the People* is the performance of a monologue by a rotating cast, which takes place on an ongoing basis in the Museum's Robert E. Blum Gallery. The performance is integrated with an exhibition of new photographic work by Levine and a selection of historical objects from the Museum's collection.

David Levine: Some of the People, All of the Time is organized by Sara Softness, Assistant Curator, Special Projects, at the Brooklyn Museum. The project is co-presented with the Onassis Cultural Center New York as part of *Birds: A Festival Inspired by Aristophanes*. The Onassis Festival, now in its third year, runs from April 22 to July 8, 2018. This year, its program expands on themes in *The Birds*, a play by the ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes interrogating the democratic process, civic engagement and what it takes to build a just society. A new production of the play is staged by Nikos Karathanos at St. Ann's Warehouse and performances run from May 2 to 13.

"Claques, fake crowds, paid protesters—they're scandalous because their participants are not present for the right reasons," Levine explains. "They're getting paid to give what we're supposed to give for free." He continues: "This performed assent or rage or cheering isn't even theirs, because someone else is speaking through them. But it doesn't matter if the crowd is actually fake; it's the *accusation* that creates trouble. And that underlying anxiety speaks to everyday concerns: Who is speaking through me? What am I trading my identity for, and who am I responsible to?"

The central performances for *Some of the People* will take place on Thursdays between 2 and 9 pm, as well as on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays between 1 and 6 pm. On *Target First Saturdays* (June 2 and July 7), *Some of the People* will be performed between 2 and 9 pm. The performances, which last about 45 minutes, are not ticketed, timed, or seated. Rather, visitors are invited to enter and exit the gallery freely, interacting with the performance as they choose.

Ahead of the exhibition's opening, David Levine will give a lecture on May 23 at 7 pm in the Museum's Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium. His talk will explore the history, theory, and practice of fake crowds, and provide personal insight into the inspiration behind *Some of the People, All of the Time*. Tickets to the event are free, but reservations are required. Reservations can be made at <https://www.showclix.com/event/david-levine/non-member>. The lecture will be followed by an informal reception and includes a preview of the exhibition.

Levine's performances and exhibitions have been presented by Creative Time, REDCAT, MASS MoCA, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, MoMA PS1, PS 122, and Fondation Cartier, among others, and have been featured in *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *BOMB*, *Theater*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*. He is the recipient of a 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship.

Related Public Programs: *Birds: A Festival Inspired by Aristophanes*

Birdheart, A Puppet Theater Performance by Julian Crouch and Saskia Lane
Saturday, May 19, 2018, 4 pm, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn Museum
Free with Museum general admission

This unique live performance of puppet theater, which is a part of *Birds: A Festival Inspired by Aristophanes*, is best described as a "chamber piece of animated theater." Images created by Julian Crouch and Saskia Lane using a sheet of paper, found objects, shadows, and a box of sand tell a story of transformation, loneliness, and how humans interact with each other and the world around them. Resonant for all ages, *Birdheart* has a recorded soundtrack and no dialogue. More information can be found at https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/calendar/event/birdheart_may_2018.