

IRENE HSIAO

ARTIST HANDOUT



BACKGROUND

Irene Hsiao is a multifaceted, U.S. born Taiwanese artist. She writes about poetry and about dance. She's also a dancer, a photographer, a cinematographer, and a performance artist. She received a double BA from UC Berkley in English and Molecular and Cell Biology and a PhD in Literature from the University of Chicago. It is clear that her education is deeply rooted within her art as, in her words, 'I write about poetry. I dance about poetry.'

She has been an artist in residency and featured artist at several art-making and hosting spaces which has led her to create many of her works as a response to the exhibits and artworks. Irene often performs in public spaces and many times invites participation from the public.

THEMES IN HER WORK

Many of her works consist of constructing and deconstructing a concept she is interested in. In her work *Blue Alice*, she was inspired by 21c Museum Hotel Chicago's *Pop Stars!* exhibit and she asks what *is* a popstar. Then she embodies this idea of a 'pop star', vanishing and reappearing at random, performing for whoever happens to be there, posing for paparazzi-like photographs.

When Philippe Parreno's *My Room is Another Fish Bowl* was up at the Art Institute of Chicago, Irene paid a visit to dance improvised with the fish. She asked of herself what does it feel like to be a fish, a diver, a puppeteer, the current, a record of their motions. She completely immersed herself within the balloon school and silently invited others around her to join in.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How would a fish move if it could swim on land? How would a tree move if it grew underwater? Think about how the air, water currents, and other organisms would affect the fish and trees' movements. How do *our* surroundings affect *us*?