

FOREIGN LANGUAGE MAGIC WORD MOTHER TONGUE

Language can bring us together, and language can separate us. Language allows us to communicate, as well as miscommunicate. What happens when language disappears? When we lose the ability to communicate it can feel like we are losing ourselves. But as our computers and phones gain vocal language abilities, are they as well gaining selves? FOREIGN LANGUAGE MAGIC WORD MOTHER TONGUE is a multidisciplinary exhibition, public workshop and performance series featuring artists, linguists and performers investigating the ways in which language forms our culture, society and sense of self. FLMWMT will be poly-lingual, spanning generations and cultures, exploring languages, ours, yours, ancient and evolving. Participating artists include story-teller and performance artist Christy Chan, the Bureau of Linguistical Reality, with artist Alicia Escott and ecologist Heidi Quante, choreographer Sasha Petrenko and "poet and musician trapped in a camcorder," Tommy Becker. Additional language artists to be announced. Language diversity reflects cultural diversity. Like species diversity in a forest, the greater variety of ways in which we can communicate, the more chance we have to understand.



This exhibition strives to engage multi-generational and multi-lingual audiences through interdisciplinary and participatory projects that play with, investigate and confront how we use language to construct our culture, our society and ourselves.

In addition to bringing together Tommy Becker's de-constructivist pop cultural media poetry, Christy Chan's re-reading of popular American texts in the Chinese tradition, and the Bureau of Linguistical Reality's public workshops and performances, I am actively seeking proposals from artists and/or collectives addressing how language shapes culture, society and the self in the Bay Area and beyond, in Chinese, Tagalog, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Yiddish, Navajo and more, through social media, and community outreach.

In the South Bay, Media Poetry Studio, that focuses on teaching girls new technology, through prose and poetry, founded by Erica Goss and David Perez, has expressed strong interest in participating in the project. At this time our discussions are ongoing but positive. I hope to include work from MPS and/or another like minded organization that supports young people in finding and strengthening their voice through language arts and technology as a way to engage younger audiences and families.



OUTREACH/PARTICIPATION

Language is inherently social. We use it to communicate. Whether we are writing in a private journal or performing in front of an audience, we are trying to understand. By presenting work in a range of languages relevant to the San Francisco Bay Area, some of which may be missing in a typical gallery setting, we will be connecting with and strengthening our collective community and amplifying more diverse voices.

To facilitate active participation, projects chosen for FOREIGN LANGUAGE MAGIC WORD MOTHER TONGUE will involve a public engagement component, such as:

- 1) The distribution of a limited edition prints featuring practical phrases in a range of languages relevant to a number of San Francisco zip codes
- 2) Call and response type videos linguistically deconstructing pop culture icons

3) Public workshops about building new words to describe mental, physical, social and experiential reactions to climate change

4) The re-readings of popular America English texts in traditional Chinese orientation (right to left, bottom to top)



5) Google translate radio play workshops and/or performances exploring how text-to-speech may alter human and OS relationships.

6) Weekly poly-lingual readings serving multi-cultural audiences and...

7) A capstone piece of the exhibition will be a temporary language school where artists and native speakers will conduct classes on a variety of language arts, from useful phrases, how to order food, slang creation and public speaking. The language school will include field trips and food oriented immersion activities as well as cell phone and or google-chat style conversation buddies to improve language comprehension.



While learning a new language is a process that extends beyond the scope of our exhibition, the experience and opportunity to meet, ask questions, practice new skills and make connections will have lasting effects on audience members and artists in terms of cultural awareness and cross cultural solidarity.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE MAGIC WORD MOTHER TONGUE CALL TO ARTISTS

We are currently seeking visual, performing and literary artists creating work about language. We are especially interested in supporting bilingual or poly-lingual youth artists who may use our exhibition as a platform for their creative endeavors.

We are envisioning a series of public events to take place over the course of our 6 week exhibition that will feature afternoons or evenings of poly-lingual, multi-generational performances. Artists working in all media including spoken word performance, video, screen play, media poetry, are invited to apply, collaborations encouraged.

>>>What does it feel like to have two communities, each speaking a separate language, coming together in your heart?

>>What does it feel like to lose your mother tongue?

>What would you say about language, with a stage, a microphone and an audience at Soma Arts in San Francisco?

Artists we are working with include:

Michael Arcega
Tommy Becker
Christy Chan
Anita Chang
The Bureau of Linguistical Realities (Alicia Escott & Heidi Quante)
Sasha Petrenko
Media Poetry

DEADLINE TO APPLY: Monday, November 30th, 2015.

For more information please contact FLMWMT@gmail.com.

To apply send us a 300 word proposal and 3 work samples to FLMWMT@gmail.com

Proposal should include the form of your artwork (is it a play, a poetry reading, a screening or a performance), duration of your project, names of collaborators (if applicable), how it relates to language and what it means to you and your community to be able to share your work in a public forum.

Work samples may include links to images, audio and or video as well as jpeg, png, word docs or PDFs not exceeding 10 MB. Please include a work sample description for each submitted work. Existing work or proposals for new work will be considered.

