

**Press release**

**Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, a foundation committed to supporting the production of contemporary art and actively engaging in commissioning unconventional projects, is proud to be a co-producer of THE LIGHTNING TESTIMONIES by Amar Kanwar at documenta 12 in Kassel.**

**Amar Kanwar's** new work **THE LIGHTNING TESTIMONIES** (2007) is a multi-channel video that reflects upon a history of conflict in the Indian subcontinent through experiences of sexual violence. In this exploration, multiple submerged narratives are revealed, sometimes in people, images and memories, and at other times in objects from nature and everyday life that stand as silent but surviving witnesses. In all the narratives, the body is central – as a site for honour, hatred and humiliation and also for dignity and protest.

The Lightning Testimonies creates an experience that emerges from a constellation of eight synchronized choreographed projections with sound tracks that lead to disparate narratives that then converge into a single projection. As the stories unfold, women from different times and regions come forward. The multiple projections speak to them directly, in an effort to understand how such violence is resisted, remembered and recorded by individuals and communities. Submerged narratives appear, disappear and are then reborn in another vocabulary at another time. Using a range of visual vocabularies, The Lightning Testimonies transports us beyond the realm of suffering into a space of quiet contemplation, where resilience creates the potential for transformation.

Amar Kanwar's poetic documentary films and video works explore the political, social, economic and ecological conditions of the Indian subcontinent, often through stories and experiences. Much of his work traces the legacy of decolonisation and partition, with the splitting of families, sectarian violence and border conflicts forming recurrent motifs. Interwoven throughout are investigations of family relations, gender and sexuality, philosophical and religious questions, and the processes of globalisation. Through images, ritual objects, literature, poetry and song, Kanwar creates lyrical, meditative film essays that do not aim to represent trauma or political situations so much as to find ways through them; Kanwar's work looks deeply into the causes and effects, and of how they are translated into everyday life and cultural forms.

(press text documenta 12)

## **Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary**

Founded in Vienna in 2002 by Francesca von Habsburg, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary represents the fourth generation of the Thyssen family's dedication to the arts. Committed to supporting the production of contemporary art and actively engaged in commissioning and disseminating unconventional projects that defy traditional disciplinary categorizations, the foundation sustains a far-reaching regional and international orientation and explores modes of presentation that are intended to broaden the way viewers perceive and experience art. In addition, it shares its collection and commissions with numerous museums and public institutions.

Projects initiated by the foundation promote artistic practices that are research-based, context- and site-specific, performative, and often informed by an interest in social aesthetics and sociopolitical concerns. Many of the projects reflect the shift away from the material object and toward the concept, as well as the use of unconventional and ephemeral materials and the employment of new technology as an essential component of the work. These strategies challenge interpretation and the traditions of collecting, preserving, and presenting works of art.

In Vienna the foundation curates thematic exhibitions of selections from its collection. **Amar Kanwar's** work **A NIGHT OF PROPHECY** is currently part of the group exhibition **Shooting Back**.

**Your black horizon Pavilion**, a collaboration between artist **Olafur Eliasson** and architect **David Adjaye**, on the Croatian Island of Lopud is open to the public until October 31, 2007.

### **documenta 12, Kassel**

until September 23, 2007

Opening times: Monday - Sunday, 10 am - 8 pm

Location: Friedrichsplatz 18, 34117 Kassel, Germany

**[www.documenta.de](http://www.documenta.de)**

### **Shooting Back**

**Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna**

until October 28, 2007

July & August: Tuesday - Friday, 12- 6 pm

September & October: Tuesday - Sunday, 12 - 6 pm

Himmelfortgasse 13, 1010 Vienna, Austria

**[www.tba21.org](http://www.tba21.org)**

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