

In the Loop

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FACULTY NEWS : JAN 24, 2017

SA+AH Professor Coco Fusco to present language-based contemporary work in Berlin



Coco Fusco by Alessandra Chemollo

BY MARIE CALLAHAN

University of Florida School of Art + Art History Professor Coco Fusco will be premiering a language-based performance in Berlin on March 11, 2017.

Her work is based on the Namibian genocide that happened during the German South-West African campaign from 1904-1914, in which Namibian tribes had attempted to rebel against German invasion, and in response, German leaders forcefully nearly wiped out the tribes. It will reanimate native testimony that was suppressed by European allies in 1926.

She will perform at the Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art (KW). Fusco's piece has a strong emphasis on language - so strong that there are no other theatrical elements involved.

"There is no dramatization, no movement, no costuming, and no visuals other than the performers on stage," she said.

KW's season that Fusco is featured in is inspired by the work of conceptual artist Ian Wilson, whose practice focuses on the use of language.

Many of Fusco's prior art projects have reflected on colonial legacies and practices and have made use of archival material.

"I have wanted to create a work about the German South-West African campaign and the Namibian genocide for a long time," Fusco said. "The invitation from KW offered that opportunity."

This is not a one-woman show, nor is it her first time presenting work in Europe. Fusco will collaborate with other performers in Germany and often presents her work in Europe.

The University of Florida professor has been performing for over 25 years. She has presented at House of World Cultures in Berlin and has lectured at the Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry. KW's new director invited her to perform this year.

"I don't ever have control over my audience," Fusco admitted.

However, she is aware that her audience may consist of the large art community in Berlin, which she calls one of the most interesting laboratories in contemporary art right now.