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FEBRUARY 23,
2016
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SURANA

ARTS & CULTURE, NEWS

Modern Dance Icon Eiko Takes Over the EV, Starting With a Badlands Unlimited Collab

 via Badlands Unlimited

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As you may have heard, **Badlands Unlimited**, the

irreverent *enfant terrible* of the publishing world, recently set up shop in Chinatown. Their new digs include an unlikely **collaboration** with the 99-cent store underneath their office, which now hawks a selection of their books — ranging from steamy erotica to artistic meditations — alongside the lottery tickets and cleaning supplies.

But that's not all the indie publishers are up to. Tonight Badlands founder Paul Chan (an artist in his own right) and Claudia La Rocco, one of Badlands' authors, will participate in an **installation** by Danspace Project at St Mark's Sanctuary for one night only. The show is one event in Danspace Project's monthlong Platform series, "A Body in Places," with Japanese modern dancer Eiko Otake.

For the next few weeks the 64-year-old performance artist will host workshops, book clubs, "talking duets" and early morning solos. Known for spare, fragile performances that highlight and examine vulnerability, she is usually one half of a performance duo with her husband, Koma. But since he was injured two years ago she's been embarking on a one-woman project that explores the relationship of the body to the layers of history and emotion intrinsic to specific places, often dancing on devastated landscapes where people have died or major catastrophes occurred, like the site of the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

As part of her Platform with Danspace Project, Eiko invited Chan and La Rocco to respond to her main "artistic concerns," including the relationship of a body to a place, the artist as wanderer, and how we bear witness to change. Judy Hussie-Taylor, Danspace Project's executive director and a co-curator of the series, said that she introduced Eiko to Chan and La Rocco to inspire a broader discussion across different disciplines and aesthetics.

"I thought it would be interesting to see people who are not that close [to Eiko] respond to some of these ideas," she said. "And what they had in

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Bedford + Bowery is where downtown Manhattan and north Brooklyn intersect. Produced by **NYU's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute** in collaboration with *New York* magazine, B + B covers the East Village, Lower East Side, Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Bushwick, and beyond.

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common—because it’s not an aesthetic, that’s for sure—is some kind of poetic resistance.”

La Rocco, who recently published *The Best Most Useless Dress* with Badlands, will read a text written specially for the evening, unfolding over the four hours. Chan will install two sculptures that pay tribute to black men and women who have been murdered by the police. “When you see Paul’s sculptures, you immediately feel Black Lives Matter and social justice,” said Hussie-Taylor. “But the phrase that comes to mind, again, is poetic resistance. They both look like they are fighting and dancing.” Starting at 7 p.m., Eiko will perform amid the installation.

“I think for all three of them it’s something very much in their minds and weighing on their hearts even if its not directly in the work— this injustice for young black men and African Americans in general,” Hussie-Taylor continued. “The show is not specifically about that, but it’s in that idea of bearing witness, and that’s what’s happening right now.”

If you can’t make it for this ephemeral evening, you may end up bumping into Eiko around the East Village during your morning commutes anyway. Between now and March 19 she will perform 16 intimate 40-50 minutes solo pieces in different places around the neighborhood. The sites include shops, bookstores, galleries, churches and a private home that have cultural significance near St Mark’s Church.

“When you place yourself somewhere you become acutely aware of the space— its history and what’s lost and what’s still there,” said Hussie-Taylor.

Maybe some of Eiko’s heavier works in the past, like dancing at Fukushima, don’t immediately seem to link with the East Village, but Hussie-Taylor says Eiko herself is the point of contact, through her performance.

“Eiko has this beautiful way of saying that wherever she goes, she collects the places and also the people who look at her and are with her in those places. So she’s the point of intersection,” she said “These are the places that matter to her, and through her, becomes broader than that.”

An Evening with Paul Chan & Claudia La Rocco as part of Eiko: A Body in Places. Feb 23, doors open at 5:30 at Danspace Project, St. Mark’s Church, 131 East 10th St.

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