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ISABELLA
SEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

Belgian Singer-Songwriter Niko Hafkenscheid to Perform
Special Courtyard Concert at *Gardner After Hours*

Musician and performance artist Hafkenscheid performs from the Gardner Museum courtyard in connection with the special exhibition Su-Mei Tse: Floating Memories



Thursday, August 20th, 7:30-9:00 PM | FREE with *After Hours* admission

BOSTON, JULY 27, 2009 — This August, *Gardner After Hours* will be the hottest ticket in the city for music enthusiasts, when the museum plays host to one of Europe's most electrifying new musical talents.

In addition to the eclectic ambiance and engaging activities that have become trademarks of the *After Hours* experience, the event on **Thursday, August 20th** will feature a special courtyard concert by Belgian musician and performance artist **Niko Hafkenscheid**. The performance is presented in connection with artist Su-Mei Tse's current exhibition, *Su-Mei Tse: Floating Memories*, and is expected to explore, through music, the exhibition's themes of memory, loss, and longing. The concert is free with *After Hours* admission and will take place from 7:30-9:00pm that evening (*After Hours* activities run from 5:30-9:30pm).

Based in Brussels, Hafkenscheid creates and performs music ranging from spare ballads to bombastic blues-influenced works, utilizing a full palette of musical techniques and both acoustic and electronic sounds. He has collaborated with choreographers, filmmakers, sound artists, and visual artists including Meg Stuart, Fadi Hindash, and Coral Ortega to create a wide range of performance art. Hafkenscheid's soundtrack for the dance performance *Maybe Forever*, which he created and performed on tour throughout the world, was described by *The New York Times* as "soulful."

Gardner Museum Artist-in-Residence **Su-Mei Tse** specifically requested that Hafkenscheid perform in connection with her exhibition at the museum. Tse had seen Hafkenscheid perform and was amazed by the feelings that his work evoked for her at the time and, even more remarkably, through the *memory* of the performance that continued to resonate with her long afterwards. These ideas of memory and the passage of time are explored in *Floating Memories*.

“The intermingling of the arts within the museum’s walls makes the Gardner unique,” says **Anne Hawley**, *Norma Jean Calderwood Director* of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. “We are thrilled to give visitors the experience of hearing Hafkenscheid’s music with Su-Mei Tse’s new contemporary art installation. During her lifetime, Isabella Gardner filled the museum with creative artists in all fields, celebrating and exploring the connections between different types of art just as this collaboration does.”

“Niko and his music have a special resonance for Su-Mei, and will fit wonderfully with *Floating Memories* and its primary themes,” says **Pieranna Cavalchini**, Gardner Museum *Curator of Contemporary Art* and director of the Gardner’s Artist-in-Residence program, which brings artists, musicians, and thinkers like Tse and Hafkenscheid to the museum to draw inspiration for—and often exhibit or perform—new work inspired by its collection and history.

At the Gardner, Niko Hafkenscheid will interpret a series of songs and instrumental compositions using various types of guitars, sampling, concrete sounds, and voices. Some of the music will be drawn from the soundtracks he has created for dance and theater performances, lending a clear theatrical touch to his live performance. He will also perform new compositions from his upcoming debut album, which will be released in 2010 on the Belgian artlabel Matamore.

After Hours attendees will be able to view the performance and then explore *Floating Memories*, which will be open from 5:30-9:30 that evening.

NIKO HAFKENSCHIED • Niko Hafkenscheid (b. 1977) is a Belgian musician and songwriter who has created and collaborated on a wide range of performance art, including contemporary dance and independent artfilms. He recently joined with choreographers Meg Stuart and Philipp Gehmacher to create the dance piece *Maybe Forever*, which toured more than 30 countries and was named one of the best dance performances of 2008 by *Time Out New York*. Hafkenscheid created the music for *Maybe Forever* and also performed it live onstage as part of the work. He recently released a CD of the music from the performance.

Hafkenscheid has created soundtracks for several documentary and feature films that have been screened worldwide, including *Not Quit the Taliban* (2008) directed by Fadi Hindash and *Simple Appareil* (2008) directed by Jean-Christophe Cavallin. He is currently working with the Spanish performer Coral Ortega on a series of performance pieces, including *My name is...* (2009) and *In this case...rather not* (2009), as well as short dance videos that are making the European festival circuit.

As a guitarist, Hafkenscheid has performed throughout Europe as a member of the Brussels electronic-rock project aMute, opening for such groups as A Silver Mount Zion, Do Make Say Think, and Shannon Wright. He also collaborated with French sound artist Christophe Bailleau on the recording *Lights out in the ghosting hour* which was released in 2009 on the French artlabel Optical Sound. He currently lives and works in Brussels.

TICKETS • \$12 General Public; \$10 Seniors; \$5 College Students; FREE Members. Tickets to *Gardner After Hours* include admission to the museum, the special exhibition *Su-Mei Tse: Floating Memories*, and all *After Hours* activities. Tickets may be purchased by phone through the museum’s Box Office at 617 278 5156 (open Tues.–Sun., 10am–4pm), online via www.gardnermuseum.org, or in person at the museum entrance at 280 The Fenway (Tues.–Sun., 11am–4:00pm) pending availability.

“SU-MEI TSE: FLOATING MEMORIES” • ON VIEW JULY 16 – OCTOBER 18, 2009

Su-Mei Tse works in a wide range of media including photography, sculpture, video, and sound installation. Her work poses the question: what might be a universal language? Trained as a classical cellist, Tse explores visual and auditory perception, while considering the fragility and recurring aspects of human existence.

Accompanying Programming:

- **Artist Conversation and Book Signing**
Thursday, September 24 @ 6:30pm
with Su-Mei Tse, Pieranna Cavalchini, and Enrico Lunghi, Director of the MUDAM Museum, Luxembourg
Tickets: \$7 General Public; \$5 Members & Seniors; FREE Students
- **Gallery Talks as part of *Gardner After Hours***
Third Thursdays, August – October @ 7pm
Guest speakers include Cliff Evans (August 20)
FREE with *After Hours* admission.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM • 280 The Fenway Boston MA 02115 617 566 1401 www.gardnermuseum.org • Green Line E train or #39 bus to Museum • Hours: Tue.–Sun., 11 am–4:45 pm • Tickets: \$12 adults; \$10 seniors; \$5 students; FREE members, children 18 & under, and all named “Isabella” • Modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo surrounding a flowering courtyard garden, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum houses one of the most remarkable art collections in the world, featuring works by Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Raphael, Degas, and Sargent. Special exhibitions, concerts, changing courtyard garden displays, lectures, and, beginning in September 2007, monthly evening event programs enrich the collection and continue to fire the imagination of all who visit.

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EDITORS’ NOTE: Niko Hafkenschied is available for interview by phone or in person in the days leading up to the event. *Curator of Contemporary Art* Pieranna Cavalchini, and *Music Director* Scott Nickrenz are also available for interviews. An **audio clip** of Niko Hafkenschied’s work is posted on the Gardner Museum website: <http://www.gardnermuseum.org/audio/OnlyErasing.mp3>. **High-resolution images** are available upon request.

Photo by Niko Hafkenschied; courtesy of the artist.