

# Local Talent Leads Downtown Triennial

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By **KIMBERLY CHOU**

For the New Museum's forthcoming triennial, "The Ungovernables," curator Eungie Joo spent two years visiting studios around the world, meeting artists from Buenos Aires to Hong Kong, Cairo to Harare. Out of the 34 artists and artist groups she eventually invited for the nine-week exhibition, which opens Feb. 15, four are based here in the city. Here's a look at who they are and what they do.

## *Dave McKenzie*

Mr. McKenzie has danced without music for hours; performed with a microphone in his mouth and the cord around his neck; and posted hundreds of on-location notices around the Lower East Side, alerting neighbors not of a film production but of the artist himself.



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Azikiwe Mohammed

Artist Dave McKenzie performs at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2007.

"In my work I've made really up-front projects, where my body is very much in question or the image of me is very much visible," said Mr. McKenzie, 34, who has lived in New York since 2001. "Then there's more recent work that's without me, so there isn't that clear frame or reference."

He said he finds the latter, more "open-ended" work especially challenging, because he isn't physically present. His contribution to "The Ungovernables" is a

table with "a few objects on it that recall a book, a book structure, things placed in a book." He was inspired, in part, by a book that had been mysteriously left in the office he moved into at Northwestern University late last year: "1,999 Facts About Blacks: A Sourcebook of African-American Achievement."

Trying to figure out the book—where did it come from? Why was it there?—and trying to locate himself within it led to a reading of "a book within a book," he said. "That's sort of how the table functions for me."

The table, whose complete meaning is unclear even to the artist, is emblematic of his recent body of work. "Almost from the get-go I'm unsure, and the uncertainty grows," Mr. McKenzie said. "It's an interesting complex for me, but I don't always feel grounded. This [table sculpture] functions between abstraction and representation, and trying to find myself within it."