

*p r o j e c t 8*

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

# Honi Ryan *Silent Dinners*

**17 June – 22 July 2023**

Opening: 16 June 2023, 6–8 pm

Performances: 15 June, 30 June, 14 July 7:30–9:30 pm

Performances by reservation at [www.silentdinner.net/rsvp](http://www.silentdinner.net/rsvp)



Honi Ryan, *Silent Dinner 42*, social performance, Karachi Biennale, 2017. Photo by Humayun M.

Project8 Gallery presents a special exhibition and performance program in June and July to mark their one-year anniversary. For this anniversary exhibition Cūrā8 have dedicated the gallery to the *Silent Dinner* project, conceived and developed by Berlin and Paris based artist Honi Ryan.

The *Silent Dinners* (2006–23) is an international participatory performance project based around a three-course meal. It has to date comprised 57 events in 20 cities across 12 countries—Australia, China, England, France, Germany, Lebanon, Mexico, Pakistan, Scotland, Spain, the UAE and the US.

The exhibition will bookend 16 years of global *Silent Dinner* events through performances and an exuberant constellation of original indexical paintings, photographs drawn from previous *Silent Dinner* events around the world, performance artefacts, intercultural anecdotal memories, audio recordings, sculptural elements, and various material representations of data and inventory, both from the history of the project and accumulated on site.

Three *Silent Dinner* events will be open for public booking, leading to the landmark 60<sup>th</sup> Silent Dinner occurring during the run of the exhibition. Participation is by reservation only at [www.silentdinner.net/rsvp](http://www.silentdinner.net/rsvp)

The *Silent Dinner* performance guidelines have remained consistent across 16 years. Participants are asked to refrain from using words or voice, agree to neither read nor write, to try to make as little noise as possible, to avoid interacting with digital technologies, and finally, to commit to staying with the experience for at least 2 hours. Participation has, to date, ranged from 2–200 people at each performance.

Variouly described as nomadic social practice, social sculpture and mindful social performance, the *Silent Dinners* have summed to form an extraordinary intercultural study of dynamic real-space communication. The *Silent Dinner* project simultaneously transcends and celebrates cultural differences, while revealing humanity's global similarities.

Vulnerabilities present at the beginning of each meal characteristically give way to new forms of human-to-human connection and play. Importantly, its shared durational quality is central, facilitating a shared commitment to a collective journey.

Honi Ryan is an artist, writer, and educator with a nomadic social practice and is currently adjunct faculty in the graduate school of Paris College of Art. Significantly, Ryan's work was recently included in *Creative Paths* at Gaiás Museum Galicia, Spain alongside artists including Francis Alÿs, Mona Hatoum and Marina Abramović. Working with long-term social performance as medium, Ryan creates and illuminates encounters between people and place in everyday life.

For this exhibition and performative event series at Project8, the *Silent Dinners* are presented as part of a new collaboration with Chinese-born Australian ceramicist Jia Jia Chen, who has developed and tested her practice across a mutually informing engagement with art, design and food. Chen's clay bake dinners will feature as both performance elements and documentation in this exhibition.

Bookings to participate in the three *Silent Dinner* performances to be held at Project8 are open at the link below, and close one week before each event.

Volunteers are being sought to work on the *Silent Dinner* performances. Interested parties should contact [silentdinners@gmail.com](mailto:silentdinners@gmail.com)

Bookings: [www.silentdinner.net/rsvp](http://www.silentdinner.net/rsvp)

Enquiries: [www.silentdinners@gmail.com](mailto:www.silentdinners@gmail.com)

## About Project8

Project8 is a contemporary art space in Melbourne's CBD dedicated to promoting speculative poetic and material innovation through exhibitions and related events. It utilises the multimodal aesthetic languages of contemporary art to experientially deemphasise differences and contestations grounded in language, politics and culture. Project8 is committed to the promotion and development of discursive exchange, collaboration and partnerships between Australian, Chinese and international artists, researchers and communities actively engaging with contemporary art.

## CONTACT

Project8 Gallery  
Wurundjeri Country  
Level 2, 417 Collins St.  
Melbourne, VIC  
AUSTRALIA

11am—6pm  
Wednesday—Saturday  
or by appointment  
+61 3 9380 8888

More information

[www.project8.gallery](http://www.project8.gallery)

Instagram and Facebook @project8gallery

Press and additional promotional images contact [info@hedonics.com.au](mailto:info@hedonics.com.au)

Silent Dinner event bookings: [www.silentdinner.net/rsvp](http://www.silentdinner.net/rsvp)



Honi Ryan, *Silent Dinner 50*, social performance, Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery, Paris-Pantin, 2021.  
Photo by Chris Lee.