

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Blake Zidell and John Wyszniwski at Blake Zidell & Associates, blake@blakezidell.com or john@blakezidell.com

CROSSING THE LINE 2012

French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF)
together with Performance Space 122

presents

David Levine: *Habit*

Performance Installation Features Actors Performing Eight Hours a Day
in a Functional House Built Inside the Essex Street Market

Friday, September 21–Sunday, September 30, Daily 1–9pm
Essex Street Market

New York, New York, August 14, 2012— The French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF), New York's premiere French cultural center and Performance Space 122 (PS122) present the New York premiere of *Habit*, from David Levine, as part of the 2012 *Crossing the Line* festival. *Habit* is a durational performance installation that features three actors performing a 90-minute drama on a continuous loop for eight hours a day. Using a commissioned script by playwright Jason Grote, *Habit* takes place within a four-walled, fully-furnished and functional American ranch house designed by Marsha Ginsberg and built inside a raw, unused space in the Essex Street Market on the Lower East Side.

Habit marks the return of theatrical provocateur David Levine, last presented by PS122 in January 2012 with *Anger at the Movies* and in 2009 with *Venice Saved: A Seminar*. With *Habit*, Levine balances the rituals of theater and the grind of an actor's eight-hour workday against a display of pure virtuosity and endurance. Two casts perform Grote's 90-minute drama verbatim on alternating days. In the four-walled ranch house, complete with stocked refrigerator, working stove, running water, and plumbing, the three performers improvise their staging and physical actions to suit their needs—when they're hungry, they cook; when they're dirty, they wash. Although the dialogue stays the same, each 90-minute sequence is radically different depending on the performers' actions, and more importantly, the emotional import they give the words.

Spectators will circulate around the outside of the house, observing the action through the open windows. Viewers are free to come and go as they please, but are not allowed to enter the house. In this way, *Habit* reinforces the fourth wall of theater while freeing the performance from other conventions of the form. A play



french institute
alliance française

22 East 60th Street
New York, NY 10022

T. 212 355 6100
F. 212 935 4119

info@fiaf.org
www.fiaf.org

within a sculpture, *Habit* fuses conventional theater, reality TV, and visual arts performance, short-circuiting our assumptions about spectatorship, performance, routine, and realism.

Casting information and press dates will be announced at a later date.

Performances of *Habit* will take place Friday, September 21–Sunday, September 30, daily from 1–9pm at the Essex Street Market: Building B. (130 Essex Street between Rivington Street and Stanton St, Lower East Side, NYC). *Habit* is free and open to the public. For more information, please visit fiaf.org/ctl or call 212 355 6160.

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About David Levine

Dividing his time between Berlin and New York, David Levine has successfully bridged the worlds of contemporary theater and performance-based visual art with a body of work that examines the conditions of spectacle and spectatorship across a range of media including performance, theater, installation, photography and video. His work has been performed and/or exhibited internationally at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), MASS MoCA, Documenta XII, Gavin Brown's Enterprise (NYC), the Townhouse Gallery (Cairo), HAU 2 (Berlin), Matadero Madrid, and Blum & Poe (Los Angeles). He has directed theatrical premieres at the Vineyard Theatre, Primary Stages, and the Atlantic Theater, alongside workshops at The Public Theater and the Sundance Institute Theatre Lab.

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About Crossing the Line 2012

Crossing the Line is the French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF)'s annual fall festival presenting interdisciplinary works and performances created by artists from around the world in New York. The festival provides opportunities for New Yorkers to explore the dialogue between artist and participant, examine how artists help re-imagine the world, and engage in the vital role artists play as critical thinkers and catalysts for social evolution. Curated by Lili Chopra, Artistic Director of FIAF, Simon Dove, Director of the Herberger Institute School of Dance at Arizona State University, and Gideon Lester, Director of Theater Programs at Bard College, *Crossing the Line* is initiated and produced by FIAF in partnership with leading cultural institutions and takes place this year from September 14–October 14, 2012.

Inaugurated in 2007, *Crossing the Line* has enjoyed increasingly strong audience response from diverse segments of the New York City area, as well as critical acclaim. The festival was voted "Best of 2009" and "Best of 2010" by *Time Out New York*, *The New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. *The New York Times* has said, "The French Institute Alliance Française's annual *Crossing the Line* has carved out a particular identity as an invigorating, unpredictable, occasionally provocative mix of genres and disciplines...It's the artistic equivalent of a splash of water on the face."

About Performance Space 122

Performance Space 122 (PS122) provides incomparable experiences for audiences by presenting and commissioning artists whose work challenges boundaries of live performance. PS122 is dedicated to supporting the creative risks taken by artists from diverse genres, cultures and perspectives. We are an innovative local, national and international leader in contemporary performance. www.ps122.org

Beginning in 2011, PS122 embarked on one of the most unusual and potentially radical shifts in its history, including a re-structuring of artist support, a business model overhaul, and the renovation of our building. As PS122's East Village home undergoes a much-needed interior renovation supported primarily by the City of New York, DCA and DDC, PS122's core activity continues to be providing audiences with contemporary live performance.



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For over 3 decades, Performance Space 122 has been a hub for contemporary performance and an active member of the cultural community in N.Y.C. and across the globe. In 1980, the organization was founded by Charles Moulton, Charles Dennis, Tim Miller and Peter Rose to offer artists rehearsal and performance opportunities in the revamped cafeteria of a former New York City public school (PS 122) at the corner of First Avenue and Ninth Street in New York’s East Village. In 1986, under the artistic direction of Mark Russell, the organization doubled its programming by converting the gymnasium on the first floor of the school building into a second performance space. Over the past 30 years, PS122 has brought forward not only artists, like John Leguizamo, Jonathan Ames, Eric Bogosian, the Blue Man Group or Annie Dorsen who have gone on to make waves in commercial arenas on Broadway or at HBO, but also artists who have triggered national debate about political and ethical issues, like the original “NEA four,” Ethyl Eichelberger (HIV/AIDS activist), or more recently Young Jean Lee and Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (contemporary social critiques), as well as artists who have radicalized aesthetic form like Meredith Monk, Spalding Gray, Ron Athey, Richard Maxwell, Elevator Repair Service, Radiohole, Adrienne Truscott, Verdensteatret (Norway), Rabih Mroué (Lebanon), Philippe Quesne (France), and Maria Hassabi (Cyprus).

Under the curatorial vision of Vallejo Gantner (Artistic Director 2005 – present) PS122 has developed a set of programs designed to re-establish the value of live performance, provide singular experiences for audiences that inspire critical thinking, and sustain the creative process for artists throughout their career. In addition to the commissioning and presenting of artists from NYC, across the US, and around the globe, PS122 has increased our activity off the stage to provide audiences with a variety of access points and context for the work. These activities include both talkbacks with the artists as well as conversations that bring together luminaries from non-arts disciplines. Topics have included everything from religion, to migration, to queer real estate. PS122 encourages the asking of questions and debate of contemporary society’s issues in both artistic practice and audience experience.

About FIAF

FIAF’s mission is to create and offer New Yorkers innovative and unique programs in education and the arts that explore the evolving diversity and richness of French cultures. FIAF seeks to generate new ideas and promote cross cultural dialogue through partnerships and new platforms of expression. www.fiaf.org

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Merci!

FIAF would like to thank the following for their generous support of *Crossing the Line* 2012:

Nespresso, Presenting Sponsor of *Crossing the Line* 2012.

American Airlines, the Official Airline of FIAF; 972, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy; Institut français; Florence Gould Foundation; The French-American Fund for Contemporary Theater, a Program of FACE; FUSED (French-U.S. Exchange in Dance); Fondation d’entreprise Hermès; New York State Council on the Arts; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; The Enoch Foundation; The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation; Interaudi Bank; The Museum for African Art; Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques; Netherlands Cultural Services; The Netherland-America Foundation; APAP Cultural Exchange; and Robert de Rothschild

Special thanks to Arizona State University.

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LISTING SUMMARY

What: *Crossing the Line* 2012: David Levine: *Habit*



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When: Friday, September 21–Sunday, September 30, Daily 1–9pm
Where: Essex Street Market: Building B.
(130 Essex St between Rivington Street and Stanton Street, Lower East Side, NYC)
Admission: Free and open to the public.
Information: fiaf.org/ctf | 212 355 6160
Transportation: Subway: J, M and Z lines to Essex Street
F and V lines to Delancey Street
Bus- M9 to Essex Street, M14 to Lower East Side, B39 across the Williamsburg Bridge
to Delancey Street stop in Manhattan

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