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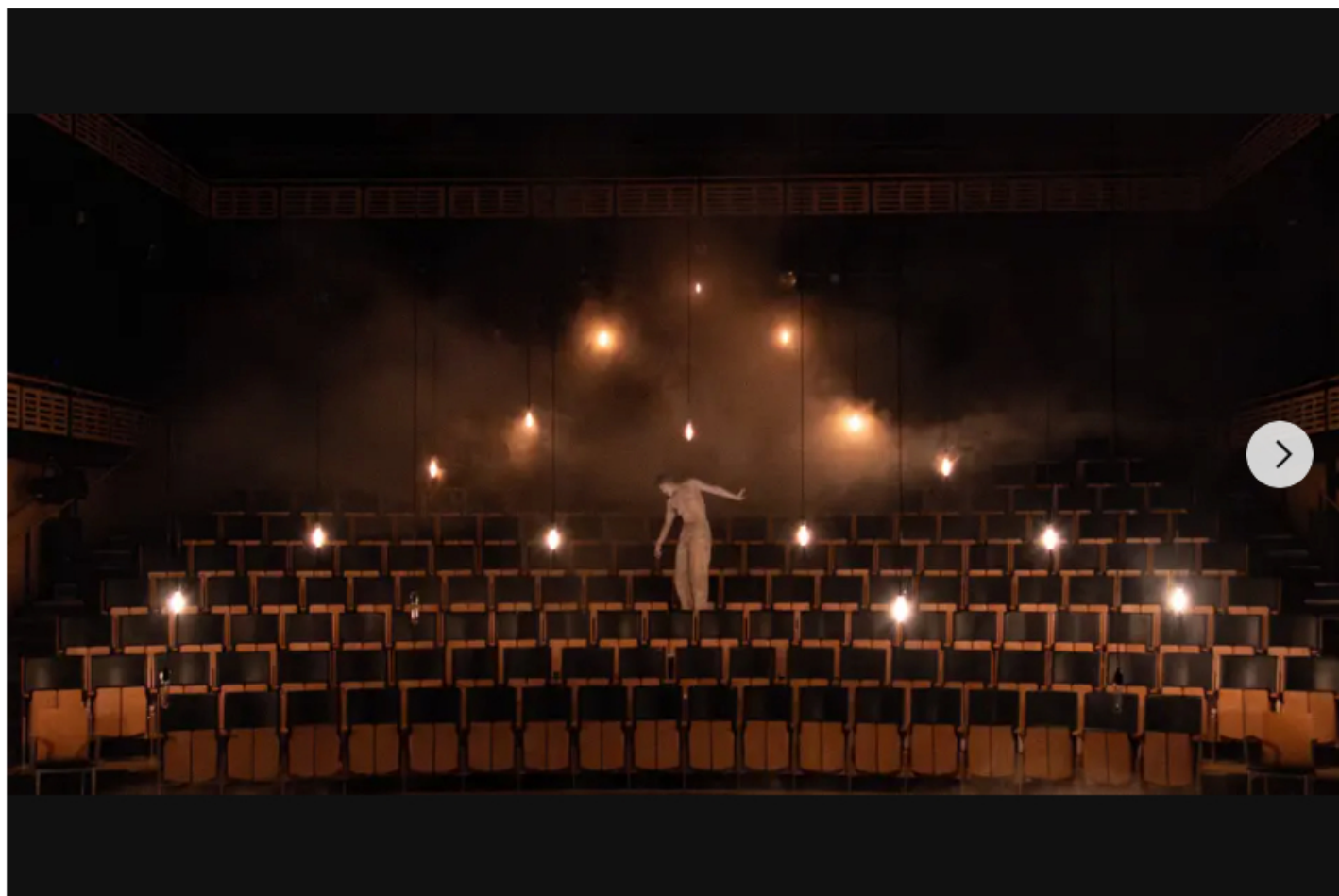
PREVIEW // THEATER + DANCE

At EMPAC, 'staging grounds' filters performance and visual art through SE Asia

EMPAC's 'staging grounds' at RPI in Troy features works by Jewyo Rhii, Korakrit Arunanondchai, Samson Young and Na Mira through Saturday.

By **Tresca Weinstein**, *For the Times Union*

Feb 24, 2026



Korakrit Arunanondchai's "The Ghost takes us by the hand" is one of several installations that comprise EMPAC's "staging grounds" exhibit in Troy, running through Saturday.

Courtesy of EMPAC



Listen Now: At EMPAC, 'staging grounds' filters performance and v

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A staging ground is a place where people and equipment are assembled before they're set in motion. In the case of the new exhibit at Troy's Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, "staging grounds," the phrase could refer to gatherings of ideas, sounds, memories and images that accumulate within artists' minds, and are then deployed into dynamic expression.

The series of installations and performances running through Saturday at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's EMPAC is inspired in part by the tradition of itinerant cinema in Southeast Asia, said EMPAC associate curator Katherine C. M. Adams: Traveling troupes staged their own versions of films, using portable projectors and screens and adding live elements. "The idea for 'staging grounds' was to look at what performance can do for visual art, and find new ways to bring people into performances they wouldn't expect to be animate," Adams said.

If You Go

"staging grounds" at EMPAC

When: Through Saturday

Where: EMPAC, 50 8th St., Troy

Tickets: Free, with RSVP

More info: 518-276-3921 or empac.rpi.edu

Both adaptability and assemblage are central to Jewyo Rhii's "Wing Theater," a collection of work that hangs suspended from a sort of giant scaffolding.

Commissioned by EMPAC, "Wing Theater" is on view this week as both an installation and an "activation," in which the artist narrates each section of the piece as she slides them side to side, as if opening and closing curtains. Quick sketches, a hand-drawn reel of "film," intricate constructions of wood and metal, a tiny movie projected on a hanging cloth — stitched together, they become a kind of quilt representing moments

of the artist's life as she moved between South Korea, Europe and New York City.

In contrast to the intimate and unpolished "Wing Theater," Korakrit Arunanondchai's "The Ghost takes us by the hand" is loud, fast and technically sophisticated. The audience is confronted with what feels like a negative reflection: rows of theater seats occupied by a lone figure who resembles a sculpture come to life. The being is surrounded by a pounding score, flashing lights, a quicksilver collage of black-and-white images and rolling banks of fog, creating an immersive, almost manic environment.

The "staging grounds" exhibit also includes two intriguing works that merge into a sonic and visual representation of eerie liminal space. Samson Young's "Liquid Borders" weaves together field recordings made along the guarded boundary between Mainland China and Hong Kong, to create a score of ominous rumblings and resonations. Close by, Na Mira's "Autoasphyxiation" translates the border around the Dragon Hill military garrison in Seoul, South Korea, into pulsing, shifting bars of dark and light.

Both installations remain on view through Saturday, along with additional offerings, including Arunanondchai's video work "Unity for Nostalgia" and a workshop with Rhii on Saturday in which participants will build a collective "city" of stories. As a whole, the show offers a rich investigation into, as Adams puts it, "the interplay between the studio and the stage." This is truly fertile ground.

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Tresca Weinstein

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Tresca Weinstein writes about dance, visual art, and culture for the Times Union. She also writes, edits, and manages content for national corporations and organizations, with a focus on the arts, yoga, health and wellness, and positive psychology. Her favorite part of her job is talking to people who are passionate about making the world a better and more awe-inspiring place, whether that means creating beautiful things, researching the science of happiness, or doing eight pirouettes in a row.
