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OutThere

A street-smart guide to
New York news and newsmakers

Beggar's banquet

Artist Kimsooja and company may look like they're asking for spare change, but it's really performance art

If you happen to be walking in Times Square next Friday afternoon and you pass people reaching out to you plaintively, don't feel bad if you don't stop and give them money: They're not really beggars—they're artists. [Insert joke here.] South Korean performer and videographer Kimsooja is orchestrating an hour-long, onetime performance of her work *A Beggar Woman* in conjunction with an airing of her video installation *The Conditions of Anonymity*. The event, which features 40 dancers simulating panhandling, is also meant to provocatively question the human condition in a rapidly changing world. Part of Creative Time's 59th Minute series, *Conditions* will be screened on the NBC Astrovision the last minute of every hour.

The Times Square show is Kimsooja's first effort directing others

instead of doing the piece herself, and she's unfazed by the prospect of midtown on a Friday afternoon. Rather, the diversity and movement are what attract her. "A group makes a bigger impact," she says. "I'm interested in the ambiguity of the situation—that these could be real beggars instead of performers." Heightening the effect will be the fact that some of the actors may be scattered in smaller groups around Times Square. The performance will be spontaneously videographed, Errol Morris style, from different perspectives.

Kimsooja has performed *A Beggar Woman* in cities all over the world, to varying reactions that she finds revealing about each place's culture. "In Tokyo, I was almost transparent—no one looked at me," she says. "In Delhi or Cairo or Lagos, people stayed closer to my body, because they share more of their space and time with others." —Ranjani Gopalarathinam

A Beggar Woman happens Friday 11 at Broadway and 44th Street from 2 to 3pm. *The Conditions of Anonymity* will be screened hourly on the NBC Astrovision in Times Square from 6am to 1am, except for 7 to 10am and 6 to 7pm.

SCENES FROM THE
CLASS STRUGGLE
Kimsooja in *Conditions*

