

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha and Jimmy Robert *"flipping through pages keeping a record of time"* at PARTICIPANT INC, New York

31.10.2024

READING TIME 4'



Jimmy Robert, *Object/My affection*, 2007-24, (Performed by Raymond Pinto), Theresa Hak Kyung Cha and Jimmy Robert *"flipping through pages keeping a record of time"* at PARTICIPANT INC, New York, 2024. Photo: Itziar Barrio

This show was selected as part of New York Oomph—a curated roundup of the best contemporary art exhibitions and events held by galleries, museums, and institutions in town during ADAA: The Art Show, New York, October 2024.

“flipping through pages keeping a record of time” proposes an intergenerational dialogue between Theresa Hak Kyung Cha and Jimmy Robert. Sharing a prolific engagement with performance, Super 8 film, and text, this assembly of their work in all three mediums takes the limit of the page as both material and a contested site of meaning.

The exhibition title is a quote from the first line of Cha’s *Untitled (le 22 juillet)* (1976). Composed on unlined office stock, each of the thirty-three handwritten passages repeats once, producing corresponding couplets before she proceeds to the next. As with the four other text works by the late artist presented here, Cha is moving through multifarious formal approaches that push against the legibility of language and multiply difference. Likewise, Robert takes paper as readymade in both drawing and sculpture that undoes their authority as document, subverting the standardization and stability of the material. For *Western Manipulations* (2008/2024) Robert revisits an extant written work, abrading the inscription of language and redacting the final words completely through a layer of tape.

On June 28, 1976 Cha composed another untitled text in Amsterdam. At the top of the second page she writes:

*one folding in another folding in one in another folding
fusion . . . dispersion*

The fold manifests itself throughout Robert’s practice via an attention to the objecthood of paper as with *Western Manipulations*. For Cha, the fold is present in her texts including *Untitled (le 22 juillet)* where language is enmeshed through formal strategies of visual poetry.

Time is folded through the weekly presentations of Robert’s performance *Object/My affection* (2007–24). Originally staged by the artist himself in a solo presentation at Art Basel Statements in 2007, and then again in a group exhibition at West London Projects the following year, this version will be performed by multidisciplinary artist Raymond Pinto. *Object/My affection* takes place in a custombuilt structure where the performer interacts with two parallel walls. His movements are informed by the gestures in a Super 8 film by Robert (blown up to 16mm) at the same time as his body also intersects with the beam of the projector. As in Cha’s performances *Reveille Dans La Brume* (1977) and *Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard* (1978), the solo performer’s body is a tactile and temporary surface for image making.

In addition, the fold is also a means to understand the negotiation of multiple languages by both artists. Together they share the strategy of writing English and French simultaneously, the interplay between these two languages building upon Cha's first language of Korean and Robert's mother tongue of Creole.

Chronicled and memorialized by Cathy Park Hong in her essay *Portrait of an Artist*, the violent death of Cha at thirty-one years old imposes a retrospective view on her practice. This presentation seeks to adopt a parallel historical view on the work of Robert through a focus on his studio output prior to 2010. That was the year we met in Amsterdam, and the majority of Cha's works assembled in this exhibition were produced both there and in Paris during 1976. Their shared time in these cities are further points of contact between the two artists.

"flipping through pages keeping a record of time" asserts the accumulation inherent in reading and writing. Both acts produce a concatenation of time, but also people. Writing is a proposition of propinquity with others in the future, reading is a proposition of propinquity with others from the past. Or as Cha writes in her text from which the title of this exhibition is taken:

someone else beside you
someone else beside me

—Jacob Korczynski, August 30, 2024

Curated by
Jacob Korczynski

at PARTICIPANT INC, New York
until November 3, 2024