

The voice is translated, and it's a mechanism for a sometimes faulty transcription, as Tsang often plays with through full body quotation. "Off-communicability," a term that Moten invents during their cross talk, becomes a useful term in thinking about what it means to speak to, to speak for, and to speak through. – Rita Gonzales, "Speech Acts," in *Wu Tsang: Not in My Language* (2015)

Clifton Benevento is pleased to present the second solo exhibition of Los Angeles based filmmaker, visual and performance artist Wu Tsang. Featuring an ongoing collaboration with poet and critical theorist Fred Moten, two videos and a pair of sculptures each occupy corners of the gallery space, performing a mode of dialogue embodied within the individual works.

Standing at one end of the gallery with Moten and Tsang each occupying an individual monitor, *Miss Communication and Mr:Re* (2014) stages a series of deliberate missed encounters. Presented first as a performance, and now as a two-channel video, the project developed from a series of voicemail messages Moten and Tsang left for each other everyday over a two-week period, from different time zones. So characteristic of the voicemail medium itself, the work is at once a fragmented overlap of two distinct monologues and an intertwined role of artist and poet. As Moten riffs on the word 'drag', vulnerable expressions, simultaneously fresh-faced and smeared with make-up, are fixed upon the viewer.

*Girl Talk* (2015), features Moten performing in 'dragged time' slow motion in counterpoint to an acappella rendition of Betty Carter's jazz standard "Girl Talk" (reinterpreted and performed by JosiahWise). It is through this dynamic that the collaboration is carried out, Tsang's role as filmmaker constituting a strong intervention in the voice of the work. Wearing a velvet cloak covered in jewels, Moten turns euphorically in a sunlit garden as the crystals adorning his body refract pink, blue, and green rays. In exploring the figure of the drag queen and the mother, Moten and Tsang, poet and artist, remain unfixed in any one persona.

Two sculptures offer a playful yet complex meditation on the relationship between language and the expression of a role. Part shaman, part alien and vaguely human in form, the works are draped in sheaths of flesh-colored fabric, crystals dripping from their folds. The sculptures silently communicate between themselves while the videos alternate full volume sound and subtitles. Choreographed in a subtle sequence of marks within the exhibition, each work calls to the other, but leaves just enough space for conversation to ebb and flow.

*Miss Communication and Mr:Re* was commissioned by CAM Houston for the group show "Double Life," 2014-15.

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