

Twist the Spine

Philip Hanson

Liz McCarthy

Kameelah Janan Rasheed

Organized by Third Object

June 1 - June 30, 2018

Ghebaly Gallery is pleased to present *Twist the Spine*, an exhibition of new works by **Philip Hanson, Liz McCarthy,** and **Kameelah Janan Rasheed**. The exhibition will run June 1 through June 30 with an opening reception Friday June 1 from 7 to 10pm. The exhibition is organized by Gan Uyeda and Raven Falquez Munsell under the curatorial collaborative Third Object.

In their 1975 project *Oblique Strategies*, Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt devised a deck of cards to be consulted in moments of creative blockage. Drawn at random, the cards bear koan-like prompts enjoining the user to "Work at a different speed" or to consider what it might mean that "Repetition is a form of change." One card offers a simple command: "Twist the spine." Using this imperative as a springboard, *Twist the Spine* draws together the work of three artists whose practices are linked by a layered and mutable exploration of language and embodiment. In each, contortions of form produce particular poetic expressions, opening up conflicting and complementary notions of vocalization and exchange.

The works in the exhibition all find ways of evoking sound. Liz McCarthy's fleshly clay sculptures point to this most directly. The forms, multiply-spouted whistles made to be blown by two or more performers at once, are unglazed and reminiscent of curving body parts. Their whistle holes are marked with red lipstick, a trace from their last user that indicates their function. Embedded in the work is an idea of communalism and mutual creation, where the clay only comes fully into being when filled with the breath of a group.

The notion of speaking in one another's voice is also active in Philip Hanson's colorful shaped canvases. Each painting transcribes a whole or partial poem by Emily Dickinson or William Blake in dense, architectural compositions that are especially notable for their striking gradations of light and color. Cacophonous and filled with motion, the paintings place specific and personal emphasis on certain words and phrases in the poems. Some words are rendered as wisps of smoke or water, some as thundering vocalizations, some as holy beams of light. By laying out the poems nonlinearly, Hanson changes their temporality and encourages the viewer to experience them not line-by-line, but all at once.

If Hanson's paintings feel like a glimpse into the artist's head while he reads poetry, Kameelah Janan Rasheed's new text installation for the exhibition feels like eavesdropping snippets of a poetic exchange. Cut directly into walls painted azure blue, the text runs into corners and along overlooked stretches of the gallery. Rasheed's language is malleable and accretive, gathered over time from past projects which themselves were frequently composed of quotations. Rasheed welcomes small distortions in transcription as text moves from output to output, a process of alteration that recalls her past work manipulating the visual possibilities of Xerox machines in crafting a poetics of flux.

Liz McCarthy is interested in the complex history of humans' relationships to the material world. She mixes elements of sculpture and performance to explore and reinscribe material meaning. Liz recently finished her MFA at the University of Illinois Chicago, and received a BFA from the University of North Carolina at Asheville. She regularly exhibits in Chicago and throughout the Midwest, and was named a "Chicago Break Out Artist" by *NewCity Magazine* in 2017. Recent exhibitions and performances include Sector 2337, Chicago; Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago; Demo Projects, Springfield, IL; ExGirlfriend, Berlin; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Roots and Culture, Chicago; Gallery 400 Chicago; Banff Centre, Banff; and Threewalls; Chicago. She lives and works in Chicago, Illinois, where she is the founder of GnarWare Workshop.

Philip Hanson has actively exhibited his work both nationally and internationally since the late 1960s. His work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including the 2014 Whitney Biennial, curated by Michelle Grabner; *Chicago Imagists*, Karma International, Zurich, (2013); and *Art in Chicago, 1945-1995*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1996). Prior to this, Hanson showed with the Chicago Imagists in exhibitions such as the seminal *False Image* at the Hyde Park Art Center (1968), as well as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1969 and 1972); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (1969); and the São Paulo Biennale (1973). His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC, and the Museum des 20 Jahrhunderts, Vienna. Hanson (b. 1943) received his BA from the University of Chicago and an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He currently lives and works in Chicago, Illinois.

Kameelah Janan Rasheed is a visual artist and writer. She explores language and narration through an interdisciplinary practice that includes installation, poetry, publications, performance-lectures, and learning environments. Rasheed is a former high school history teacher now working as a curriculum writer, teaching artist, and professor focused on research-based art practices. Her recent exhibitions include the New Museum, New York; Printed Matter, New York; The Kitchen, New York; Transmissions Gallery, Glasgow; Queens Museum, Queens; the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, Brooklyn; the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Philadelphia; and the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York. Her writings have appeared in numerous publications including *Frieze Magazine*, *Triple Canopy*, *The Guardian*, and *The New Inquiry*. Her first book, *No New Theories*, was published by Printed Matter in 2018.