

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

Eleanor King

Nadia Myre

Erdem Taşdelen

Ines Min

It Is Almost That

I am the Darkness the Widowed the Unconsoled,
the Prince of Aquitaine in his broken tower,
my only Star is dead and my lustrous lute
carries a melancholy black sun
— Robin Blaser, “The Shadow”

I am the dark one,—the widower,—the unconsoled,
The prince of Aquitaine at his stricken tower:
My sole star is dead,—and my constellated lute
Bears the black sun of the Melencolia.
— Robert Duncan, “The Disinherited”

Translations of Gérard de Nerval’s “El Desdichado”

There is a moment in conversation when you realize you’re speaking to someone in the same language, yet somehow conversing in different tongues. This glitch in communication is a fleeting opening where there is a chance to reset, like translations of the same poem by different people. Divergence becomes the entryway to action.

The task of the translator is not only to free meaning from its

linguistic bounds and limits, it is to perpetuate the endless motion of translation itself. With that lens, this exhibition is about translation’s performative nature, the transformation of a subject, the transmission of a message and the interpretation of an idea. Every translation, a performance in itself, is about slippage, the inevitable difference and distance created from source to target. Displacement is an essential movement here as

every translation builds on an altered, distinct reading that destabilizes the original.

Each translation is a single iteration on an infinite chain of communicative interactions. A translation is not only made, it is read, written, visualized, transmitted anew in the mind of each individual. It constitutes the in-between of all languages. Translation as a connective tissue becomes the way we meet the other. This method of encounter is enacted continuously between sender and receiver in sequences of repetition and difference.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Eleanor King, Nadia Myre and Erdem Taşdelen visualize the dynamic performance of translation in their practice. The artworks chosen here serve as stilled moments of encounter, flashes of the myriad translations that undergird our lives. Cha speaks to language and its intimate relationship with identity, King to music and the writhing rhythm of bodies, Myre to cultural practice and political oppression, and Taşdelen to knowledge production of the self. Cha and King reveal the progressive steps of their translation, while Myre and Taşdelen hide the interpretive series of moves

from the finished work. They are alternately poetic and violent but each is strategic in their method of subversion.

Cha's single-channel video *Re Dis Appearing* (1977) addresses the central role of language in the formation of her own identity. The film opens with a voiceover that alternates between English and French, intoning increasingly loose translations of phrases that morph into an exploration of fragmented memories of a tea garden. The on-screen images follow a similar path of transformation: hands place a bowl of tea on a mirrored table, the motion transfers to the liquid, the rocking water gives way to an image of water and then to rocks on the beach. Cha outlines the uneven contours of translation, its delicate and haptic nature at the core of a sense of self.

King uses translation to bridge disparate forms in *Wormholes* (2016). The vibrant large-scale drawings are made by repeatedly tracing the outline of a CD, wearing down colored pencils one at a time to create literal illustrations of "wormholes," hypothetical connections between discrete realms of space and time. The artist's constitutive repetition is highlighted in

the act of drawing across the vast expanse of the paper; the turns of the wormholes serve as traces of her performance. The distance between these gestural iterations is carefully calculated, preserving the material silhouette of the CD even as its content is erased.

Disruption governs Myre's *Orison* (2014). The enlarged black-and-white prints show rows of knotted thread, the verso of an older 2002 work by the artist. In the original, Myre placed a call for members of the public to stitch over the 1876 Indian Act; more than 230 people spent three years threading red and white beads onto 56 pages of legislation. Some dismembered sections of text were left exposed, a remainder of the language that was incapacitated. The new *Orison* prints reveal the methodical needlework that rendered the Indian Act powerless and senseless.

A continuing sense of illegibility follows in Taşdelen's *The Elements of Discontent* (2015), a series of prints that address the field of psychology and its visual vocabulary. Each print is dedicated to a textbook sourced from the Vancouver Public Library, a site of shared community knowledge. The

artist extracts all the graphics from a single publication and rearranges them into compositions bereft of context. Charts, line graphs and illustrations are preserved in size alone, becoming untethered representations without identifying information. The translation challenges methods of quantification in psychology and re-writes the discipline with an altered associative symbolism.

These four artists unsettle the ground of established structures, staging translations for audiences that in turn continue to translate into languages of their own. The exhibition reveals the power of the translator: the ability to generate and erase, to offer and withhold, to state unequivocally, "It is almost that."

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha was born in Busan, South Korea, in 1951. She worked in performance, film, sculpture, concrete poetry and mail art, among other mediums. She performed at the Western Front in 1978 and attended a residency at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1982. Cha studied comparative literature and art at the University of California, Berkeley, and film at the Centre d'Études Américaine du Cinéma à Paris. She was killed in New York in 1982, a week before her novel *Dictée* was published. Her work has been shown at the Berkeley Art Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Institute of Contemporary Art.

Eleanor King is a Nova Scotian artist based in New York City. She has exhibited projects in the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art and Toronto's Nuit Blanche, and in solo exhibitions at A.I.R. Gallery (New York), the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Southern Alberta Art Gallery and Diaz Contemporary (Toronto). She attended residencies at The MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, SOMA Mexico and the Banff Centre. Her work has been featured in many publica-

tions including *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine* and *Art in America*. She was finalist for the Sobey Art Award and has received grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and Arts Nova Scotia.

Nadia Myre is a visual artist from Quebec and an Algonquin member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation. She has recently exhibited in solo shows at OBORO, Carleton University Art Gallery and the National Museum of American Indian (New York), in addition to participating in the 2014 Shanghai Biennale, the 2011 Montréal Biennale and the 2012 Sydney Biennial. Her work has received accolades from *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *The Washington Post*, *Le Devoir*, and has been featured in *ARTnews*, *Parachute*, *Monopol* and *ESSE*. Works may be found on permanent exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Canadian Museum of History and the National Gallery of Canada.

Erdem Taşdelen was born in Ankara, Turkey, and lives and works in Toronto. His most recent solo exhibition was at the Contemporary Art Gallery, and group shows at Dzialdov (Berlin), Öktem & Aykut

(Turkey), Stacion Center for Contemporary Art (Kosovo), MAK (Vienna) and Access Gallery. His next solo exhibition at VOX Centre de l'image contemporaine is titled "The Curtain Sweeps Down." His work has been written about in *Artforum*, *Art Asia Pacific*, *Financial Times*, *C Magazine* and *Canadian Art*. He has received grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the BC Arts Council and the Royal Institute of Art (Stockholm), and was the recipient of the 2014 Hnatyshyn Foundation Charles Pachter Prize for Emerging Artists.

LIST OF WORKS

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha
Re Dis Appearing (1977)

Video

2 minutes and 30 seconds

Eleanor King

Wormhole IX (2016)

Colored pencils on paper

55 x 62 inches

Eleanor King

Wormhole X (2016)

Colored pencils on paper

55 x 62 inches

Nadia Myre

Orison #2 (2014)

Digital print mounted to plexi,
mounted on omega bond

60 x 72 inches

Nadia Myre

Orison #3 (2014)

Digital print mounted to plexi,
mounted on omega bond

60 x 72 inches

Nadia Myre

Orison #4 (2014)

Digital print mounted to plexi,
mounted on omega bond

60 x 72 inches

Erdem Taşdelen

The Elements of Discontent:

Mental Imagery in the Child:

A Study of the Development of

Imaginal Representation

(2015)

Inkjet on Hahnemühle photo rag

29 x 29 inches

Erdem Taşdelen

The Elements of Discontent:

Psychological Testing – Princi-

ples, Applications and Issues

(2005) (2015)

Inkjet on Hahnemühle photo rag

41 x 29 inches

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This text accompanies the exhibition of the same name curated by Ines Min at the Or Gallery from May 6 to June 10, 2017.

<http://www.orgallery.org/it-is-almost-that>

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