

Gallery 3 + 4

Jimmy Robert: Akimbo

26 September 2020 – 3 January 2021

INTRODUCTION:

Performance and gesture, intimacy and touch, the vulnerable body and how it is framed lie at the heart of this exhibition. Engaging with questions of desire, visibility and invisibility, this is the largest-ever UK presentation by the Guadeloupe-born French artist Jimmy Robert.

Akimbo draws together sculpture, installation, film, video, text and works on paper from the past 20 years. The title, meaning ‘with hands on hips’, refers to a posture that implies a certain defiance, or position of resistance. More than just an exercise in looking back, this major survey offers fresh perspectives on both early and recent works, presenting them within new arrangements.

Robert’s works sometimes play on historical instances where black bodies have been fetishized. More often, though, his own body provides the point of focus. Humble materials, such as paper and tape, comprise Robert’s primary tools, while his poised wall-based works evoke delicate traces of the artist’s gestures. Folding, cutting, collaging and erasing are the simple strategies that he uses again and

again to explore the physical and conceptual possibilities of the medium.

Other pieces, such as the Super-8 film *Brown Leatherette* (2002) and the video *Paramètres* (Parameters, 2012), implicate the body as a site of translation, transition, interference and resistance. There are constant slippages between image and language, object and image, materiality and representation. Robert's continued engagement with text and language are also evident in his films, performances and writings.

Akimbo maps the lineages and affinities between the many references that Robert uses and transforms. From David Bowie to the late Suriname-born conceptual artist Stanley Brouwn, these create a layered set of reflections, across times, places and identities. Reshaped by Robert's own subjectivity as a queer black person, these invocations often reveal how gender and race are inflected in our readings of art and the writing of its history.

PARAMETERS:

set up the parameters

adjust the structure

define the place one speaks from

who speaks? In the name of whom?

data, insignificant calculations

these measurements appease or unnerve

bail out of formatted minds

distinguish the limit from the edge

the dubious scientific approach

unsettle the apparatuses, question them even

base line of deformed minds

a direction or another wouldn't be inconsequential

titillated by verbal feats

while hiding behind an oblique language

set up the parameters

adjust the structure

static shots and elevations

the form of the text coerces the movements

*however free they regarded themselves
liberated from all technique*

*the dimension you evolve in
is it a pose or posturing?*

*outsized and fragile architecture
of a seductive yet redundant reported speech
troubadours and trinkets generate
pleasant linguistic asymmetries*

*how could I imagine that our bodies
would be made to measure even?*

*Set up the parameters
Adjust the structure*

PLIÉ:

Just as in language

Long legs, folded

Body disappearing under

its own weight

Not ballet but

the gravity

Of porous materials

Skin

Paper

Transpires as a solid truth:

Precise execution

1, 2, 3 and again

plié

You get the jest?

What is your position

at this very moment?

Are you performing this

language?

What is your position

In relation to this text?

1, 2, 3 pli 

*Repeat the exercise mechanically
until it is written all over your flesh
and bones*

*The body becomes
the word
on the paper*

Again, pli 

*At one with the image
no body
yet a tender surface*

To print

To pry

open

Using original paper exhibition notes; “I would be interested to see in which ways you could choreograph this paper into new shapes which could be read as dances – show me your moves!” – Jimmy Robert

LIST OF WORKS:

All works courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin unless otherwise stated.

Gallery 3:

1. Untitled (fog)

2019

Archival inkjet print, newspaper, paper, graphite, artist frame

2&3. Silk

2015

Print on silk

4. Untitled (Ompdrailles)

2013

Archival inkjet print, turned oak

Collection of Frac Grand Large – Hauts-de-France

5. Untitled (Agon)

2015

Archival inkjet print

6. Untitled

2005/2020

Leather, perfume

7. Untitled (Sebastien)

2006

Archival inkjet print, beech

8. Embers

2003

Super-8 film transferred to video, silent, 6 min 30 sec

9. L'education sentimentale

2005

Super-8 film transferred to video, silent, 5 min 35 sec

10. Untitled (skin) / Untitled (visage)

2013

Archival inkjet prints, oak frame

11. Untitled (classic)

2018

Collage on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Stigter Van Doesburg, Amsterdam

12. Untitled (doodle)

2018

Brown charcoal

Courtesy of the artist and Stigter Van Doesburg, Amsterdam

13. Untitled (map)

2018

Collage on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Stigter Van Doesburg, Amsterdam

14. Visibility is a Trap

2018

Inkjet print, paper, oak frame

Courtesy of the artist and Stigter Van Doesburg, Amsterdam

15. Untitled (Brouwn)

2015

Archival inkjet print, birch

16. Untitled (Belladonna)

2007

Archival inkjet print, charcoal

Gallery 4:

17. Joie noire

2019

Archival inkjet print, spotlight

18. Revue

2019

Artist publication

19. Untitled (Plié II)

2020

Archival inkjet print, satin ribbon, birch

20. Brown Leatherette

2002

Super-8 film transferred to video, silent, 5 min 55 sec

21. Descendances du nu (velvet)

2016

Print on velvet, iron tube, automotive paint

Collection of Frac Grand Large – Hauts-de-France

22. Descendances du nu (wood panels with prints)

2016

Archival inkjet prints, birch

Collection of Frac Grand Large – Hauts-de-France

23. Vanishing Point

2013

Super-8 films transferred to HD video, birch, paper, sound

Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw

Corridor:

24. You are only aware of a new neutrality that starts from the hip

2015

Vinyl

Gallery 5:

25. Paramètres

2012

HD video, sound, 6 min

26. "Cadavre Exquis" after Bruce Nauman

2010

Archival inkjet print

The Bruno Spaas Collection

27. Untitled (wall)

2015

Archival inkjet print, beech, masking tape

Jimmy Robert: Akimbo is curated by Nicole Yip, assisted by Olivia Aherne.

It is presented in partnership with CRAC Occitanie and Museion. The exhibition will tour to CRAC Occitanie in Sète, France, in spring 2021 and to Museion in Bolzano, Italy, in summer 2021.

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