

# Tanya Leighton

Press Release

Jimmy Robert  
'TECHNIQUE ET SENTIMENT'

3 August – 4 September 2021  
Preview: Saturday 31 July, 7–9 pm

Jimmy Robert's conceptually-driven practice encompasses performance, photography, film and sculpture. The exhibition 'Technique et Sentiment' presents a new series of photographs and a sound installation, made on-site at Tanya Leighton, Berlin. The artist has continually offered up his own body to encounters with unhomely and unyielding institutional spaces. For Robert, this performative element of his work is about reclaiming the representation of his body. In 'Technique et Sentiment', Robert inhabits the white-walled gallery space in all of its historically construed dimensions, approaching it with a critical, queer, postcolonial perspective. His presence empathetically attends to legacies of colonial erasure and histories of invisibility in Western visual culture by subtly asserting its own indeterminacy and complexity.

Robert has selected objects, photographic images, drawings, and fragments of raw materials from his archive, which he has collaged in the gallery. He poses with these constellations and the whole scene is then photographed. These stylised compositions reveal the body in, and among, fragments in processes of recomposition. A hand appears to hold a folded textile in place. A leg echoes the orientation of an object, with playful or erotic intent. The resulting images express their own inner narratives. In one photograph Robert is lying with an outstretched arm cradling a glossy, nectarine-coloured queen conch shell from his native Guadeloupe. Emptied of its vulnerable occupant — fished close to extinction and exported globally — this redundant protective layer is imbued by Robert with tenderness and care. In another photograph, there is a reproduction of realist Constantin Emile Meunier's late nineteenth century bronze sculpture of a dockworker, not depicted at work, but posing casually in contrapposto, hands sensually resting on tilted hips. Robert's appropriation queers the image further by coupling it with a portrait of his partner, Matthias re-performing the body language of the labourer.

The images are printed onto heavy cotton matte paper, their fibrous, textured surfaces rejecting the sublimation of the glossy photograph. Hung from batons or supported by pedestals, the images float in front of the gallery's walls and floor, reaching out with a sculptural proposition. The works in 'Technique et Sentiment' engage in an ongoing transposition and translation between form, media, bodily gesture, and materiality. Paper is a significant material here. It pervades the space palpably. 'Technique et Sentiment VI' is a sound recording of the artist handling a long roll of powder pink paper. Rolling it. Stepping over it, and dancing with it, his breath becoming deeper with exertion. As in the photographs, the body is abstracted. Present in this particular exhibition space, but not in this moment.

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The artist would like to thank Nick Ash, Christine Fenzi, Susanna Kirschnick and Anthony Icuagu.

Jimmy Robert was born in Guadeloupe (FR) in 1975 and currently lives and works in Berlin. Robert was the subject of a mid-career survey at Nottingham Contemporary in 2020. This exhibition is currently on view at Museion, Bolzano until 29 August and will travel to CRAC Occitanie, Sète in October 2021. His most recent performance 'Joie Noire' premiered in 2019 at KW Institute of Contemporary Art, Berlin and travelled to Kaaitheater, Brussels.

Robert's performances have also been presented at Tate Britain, London; MoMA, New York and Migros Museum, Zurich. Recent solo exhibitions include The Hunterian, Glasgow (2021); La Synagogue De Delme, France (2018); Museum M, Leuven (2017); Power Plant, Toronto (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2012); and Jeu de Paume, Paris (2012).

Robert will participate in the 6th Ural Industrial Biennial in September 2021 and the Aichi Triennale in Summer 2022. He will have solo exhibitions at Künstlerhaus Bremen in February 2022 and Kunsthalle Baden-Baden in Autumn 2022.

For more information and images please contact [info@tanyaleighton.com](mailto:info@tanyaleighton.com) or telephone +49 (0)30 21 972 220.

The gallery is open Tuesday – Saturday, 11am–6pm and by appointment.



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