

states that “all the parts are self-sufficient but also point elsewhere . . . a piece without a singular location or a particular medium, without an identifiable position,”⁶² recalling the Heisenbergian principle that speed and position cannot be measured simultaneously. Price’s work thus reflects the unfixed state of technological and historical change. His well-known essay *Dispersion* (2002–) likewise exists in variegated published iterations, the embodiment of its eponymous content.

In his latest series of works, *Untitled* (2007), Price also finds common ground with other Biennial artists who address the topographical impulse and micro/macro temporal shifts. Beginning with small, digitally compressed internet image grabs of people interacting in intimate ways, such as feeding one another, telling secrets, or holding hands, he enlarges the negative spaces from the images and uses those “absences” as templates for panels of plastic-encased wood veneer, a material frequently employed to frame images but which in this case gives shape to the image itself. Grouped on the wall, the pieces create negative-positive optical fluctuations that at one moment suggest a macrocosmic cartography (e.g., not-quite-identifiable world maps) and in the next reveal themselves as portrayals of individual, private interactions. Gold metal plaques arrayed nearby, titled *Gold Keys* (2007), are initially presumed to be an interpretive key to the images, but instead offer an opaque lexicon that resists translation.

Disassociate (2007), a collaborative installation by Mika Tajima/New Humans, engages the slippage between sculpture and performative process and—drawing on Dan Graham’s ideas about the materiality of sound—addresses how at times one can embody the other. The presentation was divided into two parts: the first a place of “constant production, before the final thing is made,” and the second of “post-destruction,” the aftermath of the object itself.⁶³ Throughout the show, a series of silkscreened movable units took on multiple arrangements, morphing into, for example, architectural investigations, a recording studio, or a chaotic landscape environment. Within these arrangements, whose true medium was space itself, the unit “objects” were never quite fixed: at times they served as a physical support for the work of other artists, but at other moments they became an autonomous image, sculpture, or sign. Sound events that took place within the installation—collaborations between violinist C. Spencer Yeh and Vito Acconci, for example—turned the audience into what Tajima calls an “architecture of isolation” by using their bodies as sound baffles. In an ongoing sonic element, the Rolling Stones’ song “Sympathy for the Devil” was condensed into a single tone, an aural analogue to the questions of compression and translation inherent within the installation’s constituent objects (i.e., the flatness of silkscreening transformed into a three-dimensional, mobile construction).

Often characterized as “noise,” the music of Tajima/New Humans is more importantly defined by the use of sonic elements in a modular format, much like the sculptural components. The installation *Appearance (Against Type)* in the Biennial employs flat forms and supports, similar to those of *Disassociate*, as well as hinged A-frame panels that recall mobile announcement placards. Video clips of the New Humans’ past performances play

behind louvered panels, which evoke both Bauhaus display design as well as a type of predigital advertising signage that used large grids of panels which toggle between different images. As with other objects in the installation, the video’s structure disrupts itself, in this case with credit lines or layering patterns reminiscent of the silkscreens. By preventing unmitigated viewing, these obstacles and interruptions allow the video—again, like the rest of the installation—to avoid becoming a singular totality. As stand-ins for performance and production, the installations exemplify the spatialization of time discussed throughout this essay, as well as the evolution of static artistic frameworks into systems that rely on constant feedback. A related project by Tajima/New Humans for the Biennial, staged at the Seventh Regiment Armory Building, is a film of the making of their performance, which, much like Price’s *Freelance Stenographer*, performs the idea of itself, incorporating its own processes as part of the work rather than the culmination of it. In perpetuating a serial format to disrupt the idea of performance as a singular, contained event, Tajima/New Humans embrace what they’ve referred to as the logic of the “endless remake,” a concept discussed in the next section.

The collaborations that New Humans embed in their work are representative of the second manifestation of fractured networks mentioned above, which for the purposes of this exhibition are being termed “expanded practices.” Often ephemeral in character and interventionist and renegade in sensibility, these varied activities—music performances or concerts, radio broadcasts, publishing projects, culinary gatherings, readings, lectures, and symposia, all typically in collaboration with other artists—address an issue aptly summarized by Price: “The problem is that situating the work at a singular point in place and time turns it, a priori, into a monument. . . . We should recognize that collective experience is now based on simultaneous private experiences, distributed across the field of media culture. . . . Publicness today has as much to do with sites of production and reproduction as it does with any supposed physical commons.”⁶⁴ These collaborations are notably distinct from similar concepts of the past, idealized, shared efforts in which the individual and authorial voice was intentionally dissolved. Today they are not *collectives* but *collective activities*, and they retain the authorial mark. A better model for this is a rhizomatic network, where cells or nodes come together to form constellations of connection; in this system, as in the ubiquitous social networking websites, individual identity is not just retained, it is celebrated through a transformative reciprocity. Each member is both the star and the audience, part of a unifying force functional only within that constellated form. The interactive relationships (among people, work, or processes) that emerge from these networks are not quid pro quo, however—the “warm and fuzzy” so characteristic of earlier efforts—but instead are frequently antagonistic, awkward, and strange: a realization of those social spaces that still “makes room for the psycho-killer.”⁶⁵

The network-distribution logic of many expanded practices saves them from falling into the trap of smug condescension, whereby the audience becomes material for an unsustainable “drop-in” community. Fritz Haeg’s multiple projects are emblematic of this; mobile and yet site specific (as well as self-sustaining), his works employ an intimate or specific locus to affect a



Installation view, *Disassociate*, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, 2007; from left: *As Is*, 2007; *Free We Said*, 2007

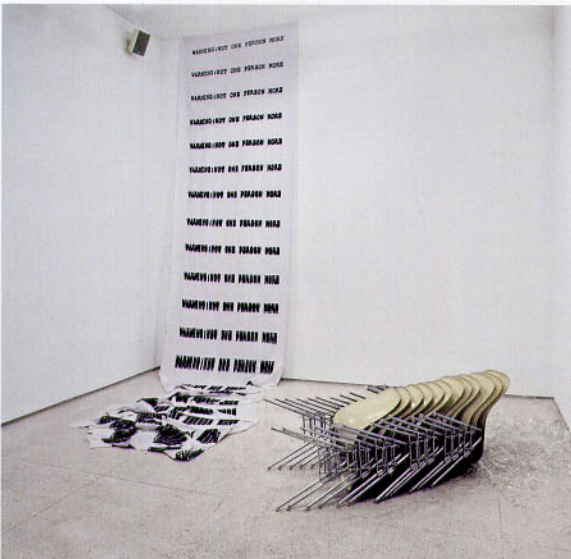


Installation view, *Disassociate*, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, 2007

MIKA TAJIMA / NEW HUMANS



Disassociate, 2007. Performance with Vito Acconci, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, February 24, 2007



Installation view, *Disassociate*, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, 2007

Mika Tajima: Born 1975 in Los Angeles, California; lives in New York, New York. **Howie Chen:** Born 1976 in Cincinnati, Ohio; lives in New York, New York. New Humans, a collaborative founded by Mika Tajima with Howie Chen, explores the intersecting strata of sound, installation, and performance within the context of Tajima’s visual art practice. The elements making up Tajima’s projects slip from foreground sculptures to background props, staging markers, and functional structures, their status in continual transition and production. Challenging the audience’s expectations of sculpture as a static presence, Tajima combines multimedia installations with serial performance elements by New Humans including sonically spare noise music grounded in Minimal composition and evoking a post-John Cage mayhem. A constantly changing roster of collaborators from different disciplines contributes to a relentless layering of visual and aural textures, creating a discordant dialogue.

Appropriately, the web of collaboration is itself frequently the subject and object of New Humans’ cacophonous sonic, optical, and material mash-ups. The two New Humans performances that punctuated *Disassociate* (2007), an installation by Tajima at Elizabeth Dee Gallery in New York, were created in collaboration with poet-artist-architect Vito Acconci and violinist C. Spencer Yeh. This multilayered work responds structurally to *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968), Jean-Luc Godard’s close-up film documenting the Rolling Stones’ fractious,

collaborative open studio sessions recorded just prior to the moment when the band’s first leader, Brian Jones, went absent from the group (and drowned shortly thereafter). Using the film as a reference point, Tajima notes, the installation and performances reflected the process of working together, with all of its contradictions, takes, trials, errors, and transparency of production.

The installation of sound-baffled modular cubicles in which New Humans performed—instruments included drums, bass, violin, and Acconci’s visceral, poetic voicing—was constructed as what Tajima calls essentially “double-sided paintings on wheels.” These screenprinted and roller-painted works, depicting diagrams for various modular structures (geometric manuals for stacking chairs and fractured schemata for building champagne glass towers), doubled as bulletin boards papered with related graphic work by Tajima and three invited artists joining the collaborative mix.

Giving visual and aural structure to the serial elements of their collaborative creation, New Humans’ time-based performances culminate, like Godard’s film, in a structure of dissolution: in the collaboration with Yeh, Tajima hurls a stack of 1960s-era Eames chairs into a tower of glass champagne flutes, simultaneously creating an instrument and sound from the obliteration as the glass smashes to the floor. It is this problematizing of expectations and formalisms through destruction and transformations that is the heart of the continuing project. **T.A.**