

Speech Lives in
a Series of
Daily Attempts:

speech lives in a series of daily attempts:
artists & publishing

Why do artists publish? An oft-repeated phrase is that to publish is to make public. When artists make a public, they are not only producing a feedback mechanism for their work to be seen, heard, digested, and responded to, they are also making new discourses and contexts for their work to be understood. These publics can include the widest possible audience of willing participants or manifest as an intimate, direct exchange. Through publishing, artists can speak their own language, firing off missives to those who most need to hear them; they can quietly resist being legible, creating a space for withdrawal and rest, a space to escape being read in order to read. Publishing is a process of self-determination, a political practice of building new ways of speaking, a way for artists to find and support each other and to create cultural access beyond traditional exhibition contexts.

The artists in this exhibition, who address the forms and performativity of speech through drawing, photography, poetics, and text, are all also publishers. In their extended bodies of work, they gather and disseminate new publics and ideas; they engage in mark-making, obfuscation, having a voice, and hearing and seeing each other. Their work lives in this everyday

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Digital pigment print on
Hahnemühle photo rag paper
Courtesy the artist and
Krakow Witkin Gallery

Joseph Grigely
Songs Without Words (Pearl Jam), 2022

Digital pigment print on
Hahnemühle photo rag paper
Courtesy the artist and
Krakow Witkin Gallery

Kimi Hanauer
***how is speech a desire a
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Digitally printed fliers
and newsprint
Courtesy the artist

Steffani Jemison
Same Time, 2017

Acrylic on clear
polyester film
Courtesy the artist and
Greene Naftali

Adam Pendleton
Anthology, 2018

Signed and numbered
deluxe book: 200 bound
screenprints on Shoji
paper, unique printed
canvas cover
Courtesy the Charlotte
and Herbert S. Wagner III
Collection

Ulises
***The Space The Language
The Reading, 2024***

A reading room

Gabriel Sosa
***Pero creo que la vida
está basada en segundas
oportunidades // But I
feel that life is made
from second chances, 2024***

Site-specific installation

Gabriel Sosa
***Twelve out of twelve,
2022 - present***

Charcoal, graphite and
colored pencil on paper
Courtesy the artist



Joseph Grigely, *Songs Without Words (Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla)*, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Krakow Witkin Gallery.

Joseph Grigely (he/him, lives and works in Chicago) is an artist, writer, and literary scholar who makes work about the art of conversation in everyday life, especially how communication may be represented, visualized, and deconstructed through the lens and politics of disability. He has exhibited extensively in Europe and the U.S., including in the Whitney, Berlin, Venice, Istanbul, Liverpool, and Sydney Biennials. His published works include the books *Textualterity: Art, Theory, and Textual Criticism* (1995), *Conversation Pieces* (1998), *Blueberry Surprise* (2006), *Exhibition Prosthetics* (2010), and *Oceans*

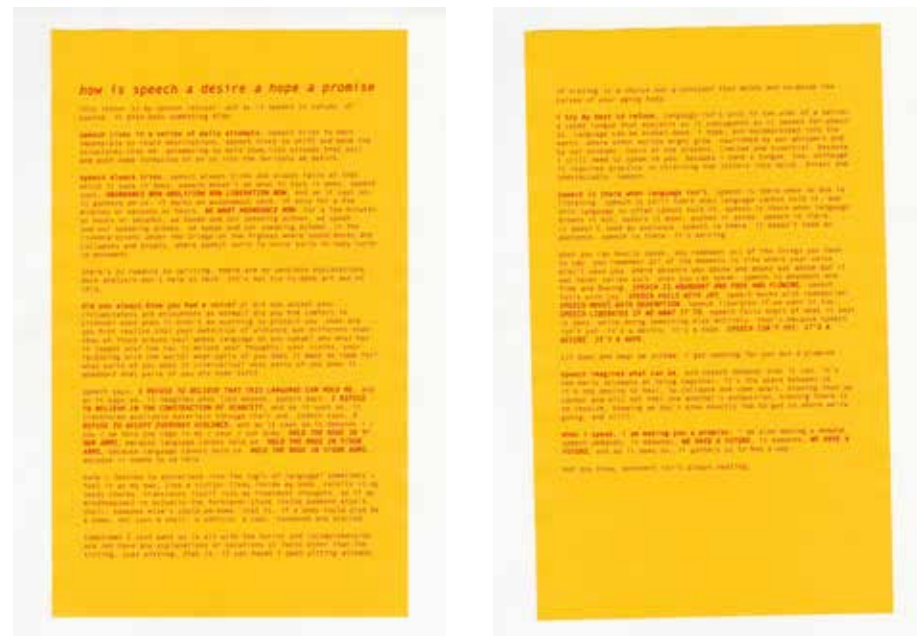
of Love: The Uncontainable Gregory Battcock (2016), as well as essays on disability theory and body criticism. Grigely was a 2005 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellow and holds a D.Phil. from Oxford University.

On December 31, 1999, Amy and I were watching the millennium celebrations on television. We were surfing channels, watching the millennium roll in from country to country across different time zones. It was great. After a while, we settled in to watch a choir singing at the National Cathedral in Washington. The camerawork was very elaborate: there were fade-ins, fade-outs, and close-ups of the choir members as they sang. After watching this for a while, Amy turned to me and said in sign language, "The world must look really silly without sound." Years later, I came back to this comment, especially how music, in particular, is a bit silly without sound. Silly without words.

This realization led to the project Songs Without Words, which consists of images from the New York Times of people performing music and singing. I've removed the captions because they seem too reductive. There's a lot of emotion in photographs of musicians performing, and I simply want to release the emotion from the burden of rational description.

It also occurred to me that part of my interest here is to convey in some sense the experience of being deaf. We can't close our ears the way we can close our eyes. You can get some sense of this by turning off the sound on your TV. Watch the news without sound. Watch a concert without sound. Watch a sitcom without sound. Don't do it for five minutes – do it for an hour. At first it seems contrived and awkward – and after a while, the contrivance and awkwardness start to get interesting – because these things remind us just how ambiguous the body is when it doesn't have words to sustain it.

– Joseph Grigely, August 2020



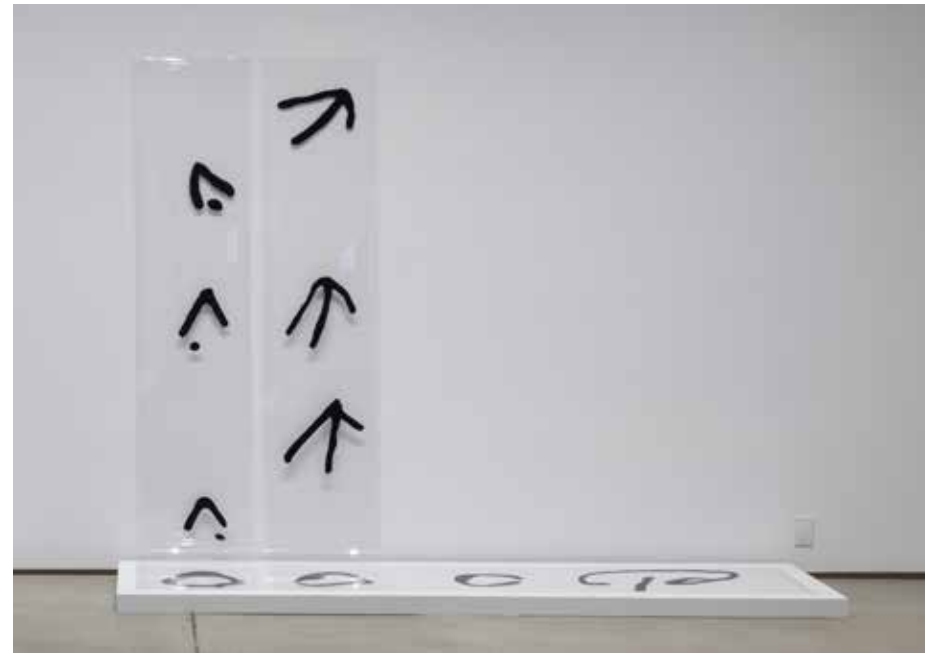
Kimi Hanauer, *how is speech a desire a hope a promise*, 2021. Courtesy the artist.

Kimi Hanauer (they/them, lives and works in New York) is an artist, media-based organizer, facilitator, and writer. They are a founding collective member of the interdisciplinary publishing initiative Press Press (est. 2014) and founding steward of the nomadic political education school Center for Liberatory Practice & Poetry (est. 2021). In their practice, Hanauer co-develops pragmatic-poetic initiatives as scaffolds for collective autonomies. Their interdisciplinary projects take various responsive forms, including installations, organizations, performances, videos, texts, programs, and printed matter. For this installation, Hanauer presents a text – displayed in fragments in the space and as a takeaway – that questions the differences between language and speech, asserting that the failure of protest speech to “do what it says it does” opens new spaces of connection between the communities it gathers. Hanauer’s work is archived in the public collections of the

Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. They are currently a 2023-24 studio fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program.

Over the past few years, I have come to understand “resistance” in an expansive sense. “Resistance” is often thought of as ‘fighting back,’ through actions and speech that directly negate or oppose oppression. Through various cultural projects, I’ve learned that “resistance” can also be understood as encompassing the practice of envisioning and working towards the creation of frameworks of cooperation, empathy, power-sharing, reciprocity, and mutual respect that I hope society at large can one day be constituted by.

– Kimi Hanauer, *Radical Softness with Genderfail*, August 2020



Steffani Jemison, *Same Time*, 2017. Installation View, *The Inconstant World*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2021. Courtesy the artist and Greene Naftali, New York

Steffani Jemison (she/her, lives and works in New York) is an interdisciplinary artist and writer whose deeply engaged research practice in language, movement, and history is activated through drawing, performance, and moving image works. *Same Time* is part of a series of calligraphic drawings on acetate that reference and expand upon Black literacies, specifically histories of private and encoded languages and visual communication systems as a form of resistance and liberation. These include Hamptonese, the visual symbolic language of Black visionary artist James Hampton, which has yet to be decoded; the Supreme Alphabet and Supreme Mathematics; and Rammellzee’s Gothic Futurism. Her work has been exhibited at institutions globally, including the CAPC Bordeaux, France; the Drawing Center, New York; MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Studio Museum in Harlem,

New York. Her experimental novella *A Rock, A River, A Street* was published by Primary Information in 2022. Jemison's collaborative projects include *At Louis Place* (a writing community co-founded with Quincy Flowers and led with Naima Lowe), *Mikrokosmos* (a platform for listening and performance founded with Justin Hicks), *Future Plan and Program* (a publishing project), and *Alpha's Bet Is Not Over Yet* (with Jamal Cyrus).

I have made a mark, and I do not know whether I am drawing or writing. I am thinking about marks and how they collect on a surface. I have accumulated marks, and I believe that this accumulation is at once a drawing, a text, and an archive. I am thinking, as I am so often thinking, about the proximity of writing to drawing. I am also thinking about how archives are always already oriented toward the future. What is the archive but that which awaits activation? I am wondering about the ways in which drawings are active, are records of activity, are anticipatory. I am wondering about the difference between acting, recording action, and awaiting activation.

I am looking for – no, I am looking at – a path to drawing that is a labor and performance of freedom. I am thinking about the relationship between freedom and withdrawal. What do drawing and withdrawal have in common? To draw is to attract, as in “I draw her toward me,” and to withdraw is to move away; it is a kind of leaning. I am thinking about drawing and leaning. But now I am reading that both are etymologically connected to drag, as in “I dragged her toward me,” and draft, as in military conscription, or as in a current of air, as in the voice of my grandmother asking me to close the window on a spring day. I am thinking about drawing and dragging. I am thinking about drawing and obligation. I am thinking about drawing and force. I cannot stop thinking about the draft of that window; I cannot stop thinking about drawing and escape.

– Steffani Jemison, excerpts from “Drafts,” *Artforum*, 2019



Adam Pendleton, *Anthology*, 2018. Courtesy of David Kordansky Gallery

Adam Pendleton (he/him, lives and works in New York) is a conceptual artist whose painting, drawing, printmaking, books, and moving image works often reference language as material as well as the formal and political possibilities of abstraction as an expansive representation of Blackness. *Anthology* is a bookwork that features over two hundred compositions pulled from fragments of the artist's personal library, layered with mark-making, images of ceramics and African tribal masks, and written phrases such as “WHAT A DAY WAS THIS” and “IF THE FUNCTION,” as well as references to the visual culture of decolonization. Pendleton has said, “Images and texts have to be continuously re-read. I’m interested in something softer than appropriation: a critical reconfiguration of attention allowing images, texts

and history to be read and received anew. I present, frame and iterate over different archival materials in order to prevent things from resting in any closed historical position.” This iterative work is related to Pendleton’s larger conceptual theory of Black Dada, which articulates Blackness as an open-ended signifier and Dada as an appropriative tool for imagining the function of art in society.

Pendleton’s work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at such notable museums as mumok in Vienna (2023), the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2022), the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2021), Le Consortium in Dijon (2020), and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin (2017). His work has also been featured in the Whitney Biennial (2022), the Venice Biennale (2015), and other prominent group exhibitions, including *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America* at the New Museum in New York (2021). Writing and publishing are central to Pendleton’s practice; his many books include *Pasts, Futures, and Aftermaths* (2021), *Who Is Queen? A Reader* (2021), *As Heavy as Sculpture* (2021), and *Black Dada Reader* (2017).

Black Dada is a way to talk about the future while talking about the past. It is our present moment. The Black Dada must use irrational language. The Black Dada must exploit the logic of identity. Black Dada is neither madness, nor wisdom, nor irony, nor naiveté. Black Dada: we are successive. Black Dada: we are not exclusive. Black Dada: we abhor simpletons and are perfectly capable of an intelligent discussion. The Black Dada’s manifesto is both form and life. Black Dada your history of art.

– Adam Pendleton, Black Dada manifesto, 2008



Ulises Carrión inside of Other Books and So Archive, the second iteration of his Amsterdam-based bookstore, 1979. Courtesy of Ulises.

Ulises

Written language is a sequence of signs expanding within the space; the reading of which occurs in the time. A book is a space-time sequence.

Ulises aims to invoke the spirit of Mexican conceptual artist Ulises Carrión by activating elements from his early bookworks, which play with underlying structures of poetry, and from Carrión’s manifesto, *The New Art of Making Books*, which refers to books as “space-time” sequences, rather than just containers for text.

At the center of the reading room is a selection of Ulises Carrión’s publications that explore the forms and performative nature of language. Surrounding these is a display of additional independent art publications and artists’ books reflecting the exhibition’s thematic threads alongside publications from the other exhibiting artists.

The space also features designated stations for reading and looking, and a graphic interpretation on the wall illustrating the book as a space-time sequence. Viewers are welcome to pick up and read the books.

About Ulises

Ulises is a bookshop and project space dedicated to artists' books and independent art publications. Exploring the relationship between publics and publications, Ulises provides an inventory of titles not widely distributed in the United States on contemporary art, graphic design, art theory, architecture, criticism, curatorial practice, and adjacent fields. We support people who make books and expand the boundaries of what art publishing can be.

Hosting projects, exhibitions, and residencies, Ulises's open-ended programming explores publishing as an incubator for new forms of artistic, editorial, curatorial, and pedagogical practice. Ulises sees the democratic potential of publishing as a vehicle for activism, education, assembly, and exchange.

The name Ulises is a tribute to the work and legacy of Ulises Carrión, a Mexican-born poet, conceptualist, and avant-garde artist who was an early pioneer and theorist of the artist's book, and the founder of the Amsterdam-based bookshop *Other Books and So* (1975–79).

The long-term project of Ulises is now a non-profit focused on our programmatic and curatorial activities; this exists alongside our LLC, Other Books and Co, which is an extension of Ulises and a nod to Carrión's storefront. Both are committed to the cause of artists' books and "...could be a shop, a gallery, you can call it, an archive, an institute, company, group, whatever."



Gabriel Sosa, *Take One #1*, 2021. Installation View, *Exposed 2021*, The Current, Stowe, Vermont, 2021. Courtesy the artist.

Gabriel Sosa (he/him, lives and works in Greater Boston) is a Cuban-American artist, educator, and curator working at the intersection of drawing, public art, and community engagement. Rooted in his bilingual upbringing in Miami as well as his previous experiences as a court interpreter, Sosa's art practice often explores how language shapes our perceptions of the world around us and conditions imbalances of power. On view in the gallery are drawing works and a site-specific installation addressing jury trials and their relationship to belonging and trust. These include selections from Sosa's *Twelve out of Twelve* series, which references *Ramos vs. Louisiana*, a 2020 U.S. Supreme Court case in which the Court ruled that the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires that guilty verdicts be unanimous in trials for serious crimes, deeming unconstitutional that Louisiana had allowed non-unanimous jury verdicts to convict defendants of serious felonies until 2018. The case

drew upon precedents such as jury trials in English common law and Jim Crow laws that allowed for racial discrimination within juries, and Sosa utilizes layered mark-making and text fragments to evoke how these histories influence the present. Paired with this series is a series of blank sketchbooks stacked in various places in the Gallery and Foundation office, with the words *segundas oportunidades* printed on the cover, free for audiences to take. The title of the installation *Pero creo que la vida ésta basada en segundas oportunidades* translates to “But I feel that life is made from second chances,” and refers to an excerpt from a character letter written by a loved one for leniency in sentencing, which Sosa had access to as a translator. With this gesture, Sosa asks viewers to reflect on the role of second chances in their own lives, when they were given one or when they gave one to someone else and the impact it has had, creating a space of connection over perceptions of guilt and redemption and how they are socially conditioned.

Sosa’s work has been shown at Fitchburg Art Museum; The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco; Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Havana, Cuba; Tufts University Art Galleries; A R E A, Boston; and Museo La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia. He has been an artist-in-residence at Lugar a dudas, Urbano Project, Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, Mass MoCA, Santa Fe Art Institute, The Art & Law Program, and Materia Abierta. Most recently, he was named as one of The Makers by WBUR, a series highlighting creatives of color making an impact in the region. Sosa is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Art Education Department at MassArt, and Deputy Director of Essex Art Center, a community arts nonprofit in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

I draw upon my experiences as a Cuban-American and as a court interpreter to explore various topics, including memory, translation, and social justice. I am especially interested in imperfection – in the pitfalls of translation and in the malleability of memory. In the courtroom, I regularly hear multiple versions of the same event from different witnesses. Despite the variations, each witness remains

convinced of the accuracy of their recollection. Similarly, when I’ve done research with my family in Cuba, each relative has a different narrative of the same event. The truth lies somewhere in the middle, but to what extent do those memories become the speaker’s truth, regardless of how unreliable those memories may be? I am captivated by how these narratives transform over time and what role language plays in shaping, preserving, and conveying those memories.

I am also interested in the human stories in the justice system that all too often remain invisible. Years ago, I created a series of drawings inspired by letters written by the family and friends of defendants. Defense attorneys compile these letters with the objective of presenting them to a judge in order to portray their clients’ humanity. The letters are unequivocally visceral and heartfelt, and I hope that those who engage with my work come away with a greater awareness of that poignancy – of the personal, intimate stories that exist where we might not expect them to.

–Gabriel Sosa, 2018

Established in 2005, Wagner Foundation is a private family foundation based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Our vision is a just and robust community where everyone has the ability to imagine, shape, pursue, and sustain the lives they wish to lead. Wagner Arts is our platform for a rotating exhibition space for contemporary art at Wagner Foundation's office, Cultural Transformation grant-making, and other related initiatives. Find out more at wagnerarts.org.

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negotiation of public and private exchange, of refusal, and insists on the necessity of shaping the discourse towards what demands to be said. By creating spaces of connection through the act of publishing, establishing platforms for artists' ideas to emerge, they each build new worlds of social and political exchange and possibility.

As Kimi Hanauer writes in *how is speech a desire a hope a promise*, from which the title of this exhibition is drawn:

speech lives in a series of daily attempts. speech tries to mark impossible to reach destinations. speech tries to shift and bend the structures that be. attempting to mold them into streams that pull and push some formations of an us into the horizons we desire.

This exhibition marks the first in a series of exhibitions and public programs by Wagner Foundation that highlights how arts and culture are essential to our collective well-being. We support visionary artists and arts organizations that believe in expanding cultural access in service of a healthy society, including through artists' publications.

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Series of Daily
Attempts: Artists
& Publishing

Joseph Grigely
Kimi Hanuaer
Steffani Jemison
Adam Pendleton
Gabriel Sosa
Ulises

Artists & Publishing

Organized by
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WAGNER ARTS