

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

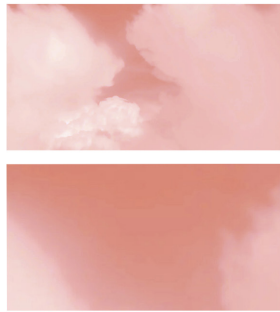
CONTACT: Park C. Myers, Curator
804.643.1708 or pmyers@1708gallery.org

enunciating silence and

Jesse Chun

November 1 - December 8, 2019

Opening Reception Friday November 1, 5-9 pm



RICHMOND - 1708 is pleased to present *enunciating silence and*, a solo exhibition of new and recent work by Jesse Chun. Through sculpture, video, sound, and drawing, Chun examines the English language and its power structures through the institutional mechanisms of EFL (English as a Foreign Language), formerly known as ESL (English as a Second Language). Working with various found sources such as EFL/ESL workbooks, youtube pronunciation tutorials, standardized tests, watermarks for diplomas and certificates, and index pages of books on the

English language, Chun re-interprets the authority, function, and meaning of the world's "common language" into a new system of relations.

In the sculptures titled *enunciating silence and*, Chun casts children's English letter construction toys as tools for disassembling the written language. By using the educational toys incorrectly, she does not build English letters -- but instead builds abstract forms that are in between language and form. She manipulates these fixed, English-alphabetic forms into a bodily, flaccid state using silicone and graphite. In *voiceless consonants*, pronunciation tutorials are fragmented and abstracted into a soundscape -- almost silent voices whisper voiceless consonants, layered until they become like waterfalls before fading back into silence. Likewise, works like *INDEXING MY MONOLOGUE*, a multi-channel video installation, also reflects on the corporeal, emotional, and interior ramifications of the English language's hegemony and subjugation, particularly on the non-native speaker.

enunciating silence and establishes new, non-representational semiotic trajectories, which break free from the pre-existing systems of the English language. By examining the world's lingua franca through its own pedagogical words, Chun constructs material, sonic, and linguistic abstractions that decenter English: situating it as a "point of departure rather than the final destination of a newly configured scene of languaging". (Rey Chow, *Not like a native speaker*). Chun considers new poetics

and departures for legibility, diaspora, and the untranslatable.

Jesse Chun is a conceptual artist working with text, sculpture, video, sound, drawing, and publishing. Her work has been exhibited at The Drawing Center; Queens Museum; BAM; Bronx Museum of the Arts; Oakville Galleries; Spencer Brownstone Gallery; Fridman Gallery, among others. Select awards and commissions include the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship at ISCP; Triple Canopy; The Drawing Center's Open Sessions; BRIC Media Arts Fellowship; Bronx Museum AIM; and a solo public commission at the Brooklyn Bridge Park. Her publications include *Intangible Heritage* (Wendy's Subway x BAM, 2018); *Blueprints* (Silent Face Projects, 2017); and *Valid From Until* (Booklyn Press, 2016). Select public collections include the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Artist Book Collection; Cleveland Clinic Art Collection; the Smithsonian Institution, Archive of American Art; the Los Angeles Contemporary Archive; Yale University Library; Asia Art Archive in America, and more. Chun's work has been reviewed in Artforum, the Brooklyn Rail, ArtAsiaPacific, Asia Literary Review, Art21, the Wall Street Journal, and BOMB. She lives and works in New York. Chun will be a visiting artist at VCU Sculpture and Extended Media in Spring 2020.

For more information, please visit www.1708gallery.org.

1708 Gallery's 2018-2019 exhibition season is generously supported in part by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Mezzo Loft Apartments, the Margot and Allan Blank Foundation, Molly Dodge, Adam Dorland, Greta Harris, Kathryn Henry-Choisser, Patrick Kelly and Karen Hansen, Sandy and Hyen Kjerulf, Michael Lease and Kim Wolfe, Andrea Levine, Katie and Danny MacNelly, Lucy Meade, Kerry Mills, Sally and Bob Mooney, Jay and Marcia Olander, Pam and Bill Royall, John Ryan and Wesley Chenault, Marcia and Harry Thalhimer, Katie and Ted Ukrop, Erin White and Courtnie Wolfgang, and Caroline and Richard Wright.