

GREY ART NYU GALLERY

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TSENG KWONG CHI: PERFORMING FOR THE CAMERA PRESENTED BY GREY ART GALLERY, NYU

Nationwide tour opens at NYU on April 21, 2015

WHAT

Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera is the first major museum retrospective of works by Tseng Kwong Chi (1950–1990), a prolific artist and key documentarian of Manhattan’s downtown scene in the 1980s. The exhibition features over 80 photo-based works alongside archival materials. Tseng is best known for his *East Meets West* and *Expeditionary* series in which he adopted the identity of a visiting Chinese official wearing a Mao suit and shot photographs of himself posed in front of popular tourist sites or in magnificent natural settings. He also extensively documented his close friend Keith Haring making chalk drawings on New York City subway platforms. *Performing for the Camera*, however, emphasizes the elements of masquerade, theatricality, and performance at the root of his conceptual photographic practice and also presents examples from less well-known series including *Costumes at the Met*; *South Jersey lifeguards*; the politically conservative *Moral Majority*; *East Village denizens*; and rubber-stamped Polaroid club-scene photomontages. Combining photography with performance, personal identity with global politics, and satire with deadpan farce, Tseng created compelling images whose complexity is belied by their easy humor and grace. *Performing for the Camera* is curated by Amy Brandt, McKinnon Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Chrysler Museum of Art.



East Meets West Manifesto, 1983. *East Meets West* series. C-print, printed 2014. Courtesy Muna Tseng Dance Projects, Inc., New York

WHEN

April 21 through July 11, 2015

WHERE

Grey Art Gallery, New York University
100 Washington Square East, New York, NY 10003

SUPPORT

Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera is co-organized by the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, and the Grey Art Gallery, New York University. The Chrysler Museum thanks Oriana McKinnon and the McKinnon Family. The Grey Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the Shiseido Endowment; the Grey’s Director’s Circle, Inter/National Council, and Friends; Jane Wesman Public Relations; and the Abby Weed Grey Trust.

CATALOGUE

Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated 178-page publication. The book includes contributions by Amy Brandt, PhD, McKinnon Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Chrysler Museum of Art; Lynn Gumpert, Director, Grey Art Gallery, New York University; Alexandra Chang, Curator of Special Projects and Director of Global Arts Programs, Asian/Pacific/American Institute, New York University; Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson, Assistant Professor of Performance Studies, Northwestern University; Muna Tseng, the artist's sister, a choreographer and dancer, and director of the Tseng Kwong Chi Estate. It also features a comprehensive exhibition history and bibliography.

**EXHIBITION
TOUR**

Grey Art Gallery, New York University, April 21–July 11, 2015

The Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, August 18–December 13, 2015

Tufts University Art Gallery at the Shirely and Alex Aidekman Arts Center, January 21–May 22, 2016

The Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, September 17–December 11, 2016

**TSENG
KWONG
CHI**

Tseng Kwong Chi was born in Hong Kong in 1950 and immigrated to Vancouver with his family when he was 16 years old. After studying briefly at the University of British Columbia, Tseng attended the Académie Julian in Paris from 1974 to 1977, where he began studying photography. After moving to New York in 1978, Tseng embarked on the performative self-portraits that formed the backbone of his artistic practice. The artist immersed himself in the city's vibrant downtown scene, where he quickly emerged as one its most colorful characters. He died in 1990 at age 39 of complications from AIDS.

**GREY
ART
GALLERY**

The Grey Art Gallery is New York University's fine arts museum, located on historic Washington Square Park in New York City's Greenwich Village. It offers the NYU community and the general public a dynamic roster of engaging and thought-provoking exhibitions, all of them enriched by public programs. With its emphasis on experimentation and interpretation, and its focus on exploring art in its historical, cultural, and social contexts, the Grey serves as a museum-laboratory for the exploration of art's environments. Exhibitions organized by the Grey have encompassed all the visual arts: painting, sculpture, drawing and printmaking, photography, architecture and decorative arts, film, video, and performance. In addition to producing its own exhibitions, which often travel to other venues in the United States and abroad, the gallery hosts traveling shows that might otherwise not be seen in New York and produces scholarly publications that are distributed worldwide.