

ARTFORUM

Wu Tsang

CLIFTON BENEVENTO

515 Broadway, 6BR

September 3–October 31



Wu Tsang, with Fred Moten *Film still of Miss Communication and Mr:Re, 2014*, two channel HD color video with stereo sound, 17 minutes.

For Wu Tsang, dialogue is the primary actor by which subjectivities are accorded representation. In the artist's latest outing, his voice musingly floods the gallery, in dissonance with that of writer and theorist Fred Moten. This audio track, playing independently from the images on display, forms half of *Miss Communication and Mr:Re, 2014*, a two-channel work that pays homage to a fortnight when Moten and Tsang delivered each other lengthy voicemails. Both their countenances play respectively over HD screens, which the artist has positioned like portraits. Tsang and Moten silently drift in thought and expression as the audio plays their overlapping associative ruminations—a diptych of simultaneous soliloquys. At times, Moten wears a grin with coral lipstick; occasionally Tsang's eyes appear glazed with tears. Moten's voice is once heard in self-retort: "Being meant for somebody means that they incomplete you."

Across the gallery, *Girl Talk, 2015*, shows Moten in a garden, adorned in velvet and crystal, circling amid lens flares in an ecstatic state of spiritual harmony. The work's sound track is a soulful a cappella rendition of Betty Carter's song of the same name, performed by JosiahWise. Two eerie nearby sculptures, both *Untitled, 2015*, are drapes of beige mesh fabric and crystals over metal supports, seemingly given volume by invisible bodies.

Severing speech from image, Tsang evasively transmits representation. Given that the act of representing identity is often accompanied by expectations and diminished expressive autonomy, perhaps such splintered voices pose a service to their speakers: Their speech flows unchecked by the body. Concluding *Miss Communication and Mr::Re*, Moten talks over Tsang's farewell message: "My messages were meant for your messages. . . . We were meant for one another, Wu."

— Nicolas Linnert