

Press Release

August 2010

Tim Rollins and K.O.S.

Songs without Words

September 24–November 6, 2010

Opening: Friday, September 24, 6–8pm

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *Songs without Words*, an exhibition of new work by the American artist collective Tim Rollins and K.O.S.. At the same time *Songs without words* is the first exhibition ever that deals solely with musical themes.

The artist collective Tim Rollins and K.O.S. describes their own way of working with a quotation from Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: "The thoughts which are expressed to me by music that I love are not too indefinite to be put into words, but on the contrary, too definite. And so I find, in every effort to express such thoughts, that something is right, but at the same time, that something is lacking in all of them." Whereas Mendelssohn-Bartholdy uses music as a means of expression, Tim Rollins and K.O.S. have developed a method that is all their own.

Soon after this group formed as a project for young people growing up in the South Bronx in the early 1980s, they began to create works using the existing material close at hand. They first utilized bricks from torn down buildings in the neighborhood, soon turning to used school materials, textbooks, and notebooks as a central element of their work, as can be seen in this exhibition. With a strong political motivation and shocked by actual conditions in the South Bronx, Rollins developed a unique learning environment that ultimately turned into the artist group the Kids of Survival. Over the years, the group reinvented itself several times.

Rollins, then a teacher, encouraged his students to read aloud to one another in groups, and then requested that they draw sketches and ideas based on what they heard. The books were then taken apart and applied to canvas, and now served as a support for a painterly composition comprised of

various motifs created by the individual group members. Similar to Mendelssohn's idea, here the written text was expanded as both an object and in terms of its content.

In the late 1980s, the group began working with musical themes, using sheet music as a starting point for their works. At this exhibition, Tim Rollins and K.O.S. present new works that emerged by way of engagement with musical pieces by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Brecht/Weill, Joseph Haydn, and Richard Strauss. Here too, the material question remained an important element. For example, in the works on Brecht/Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* they used whiskey, so laden with meaning, instead of paint, and Mendelssohn's incidental music to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is treated with mustard seeds and apple juice.

For last year's large scale survey at Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum, New York, Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, and Frye Art Museum in Seattle, an extensive catalog was published, *Tim Rollins and K.O.S.: A History*.

For further information please contact Björn Alferts (b.alferts@presenhuber.com) at Galerie Eva Presenhuber.

Opening Hours:	Tuesday – Friday	12noon–6pm
	Saturday	11am–5pm