



Plexiglas, powder-coated aluminum, enamel, glue, plastic letters

Ken Lum  
*The Shopkeeper Series*

3 May – 2 June  
Opening: 3 May, 18h00 – 21h00

Gallery Hours:  
Thursday 14h00 – 18h30  
Friday 14h00 – 18h30  
Saturday 14h00 – 18h00  
By appointment: 079 625 69 22

It is with great pleasure that Jancou announces its first exhibition with Ken Lum, which will present a selection of work from the artist's *Shopkeeper* series. Opening on May 3<sup>rd</sup> during Geneva's Nuit des Bains, the show will be on view through June 2<sup>nd</sup>. It will be Lum's first exhibition in Switzerland in nearly a decade.

In a manner characteristic of his practice, Lum's *Shopkeeper* works employ popular forms to explore the charged intersection of the private and public spheres in an increasingly globalized world. This series, begun in 2000, consists of signs Lum created for modest local businesses imagined by the artist. They pair screen-printed logos and found imagery typical of such shop signs with bold messages, spelled out in movable type, that are atypically personal and expressive of the fictive shopkeepers' own subjectivity. The formal composition of the work— its pairing of a permanently fixed, informational panel with a mutable, expressive half— represents a constrained insertion of the subject position and desire into the supposedly objective realm of business.

The *Shopkeeper* series are one of multiple bodies of work that Lum has created mimicking the language and forms of street signage. His fascination with the system of signs originated with his part-time job as a sign painter growing up, and manifested itself in his earliest works, such as a performance from 1978 in which he spent days standing by the side of the highway, eventually replacing his body with a cardboard silhouette so that he himself literally "became a sign." Lum asks: "how do we understand our own subjecthood and the subjectivity of an other in the context of a world in which such terms are often imposed from the outside in?". He explains: "I am interested, through these Shopkeeper works, in the idea of imagining the subjectivity of the proprietor behind the shop sign and in recognizing how compromised subjectivity is by political and social economy."

Born in 1956 in Vancouver, Canada, Lum has been exhibiting his work since the 1970s. His complex oeuvre includes performances in public spaces, sculptures, photographs, paintings, and installations that have been exhibited in galleries and museums in North America, Asia, and Europe. Last year, Lum was the subject of a retrospective at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Earlier this year, he was awarded a commission for *The River Between Us*, sponsored by Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, to be realized by Fall 2013. He has also been commissioned to create a work for the Olympic Sculpture Park at the Seattle Art Museum. An exhibition of new work by the artist at Marc Jancou Contemporary, New York, is forthcoming in 2013.