



Poster for the performance,  
*Sprungkopf*  
Courtesy of Peres Projects, Berlin



**Terence Koh**  
*Sprungkopf*, 2006  
Performance  
Photo: Isaac Bigsby Trogdon  
Courtesy of Peres Projects, Berlin



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TERENCE KOH AT PERES PROJECTS, BERLIN

## DOOM-COUTURE

ISAAC BIGSBY TROGDON

**24. August 2006**

*„Terence Koh – Sprungkopf“, Peres Projects, Berlin  
12. August 2006*

For those who were paying attention, Berlin-Summer-2006 took place somewhere around Schlesisches Tor in Kreuzberg. This was evident not only in the zoo of fun-loving city dwellers spilling out of the bars and into street – indeed one could mingle with the boozy throngs swarming around Peres Projects on more than one occasion as well. The gallery's summer program included an altogether pleasant and totally packed performance by the Los Angeles politico-song and dance collective, **My Barbarian**, and finished with a much darker and impressive affair – *Sprungkopf* – the new work by **Terence Koh**.

The event promised spectacle and was cloaked in mystery. The only information made public was a black poster picturing a fragment of a statue's face declaring the event to be the debut of **Koh's** new album. Its look resembled the poster for his, *Mein Tod* exhibition from the previous fall in Peres' then new Berlin location – a ceremony to the death of its creator performed by young boys caked in icing. This second event proved to be a further development of themes and symbols present in **Koh's** recent work – monochromatic environments of potent doom, damp with mystic homoeroticism. But where such installations as the *Temple of Golden Piss*, or *Gone*, yet still set the mood to endless floating in calm, creepy serenity, *Sprungkopf* was in some ways a departure. One night only, it was fashioned as a moment in time – abrupt, openly aggressive and practically invisible.

The experience of the performance was a mixture of orchestrated claustrophobia and anticipation, fashion-world photo-frenzy followed by a swarming burst of *krach* and action which on its own would fit somewhere in the avant-noise spectrum between **Crash Worship** and **Wolf Eyes**. It happened like this: Blocked by two moustached fellows in black, the crowd assembled before the entranceway. All at once the audience was allowed inside, greeted by a powerful floodlight inducing a confused bustle as the crowd blindly tried to orient itself in this otherwise pitch black space. There were no clues as to where or what to look for. The room filled quickly and for several minutes there was only muted chatter under the harsh glare of the big lamp. Rumor had it that



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Courtesy of kohbunny.com and  
Peres Projects, Berlin



somewhere in the room there were three art-damaged drum-kits painted scary black. Then we waited – the space becoming too hot and stuffy. At some point the shockwaves of a massive boom from the speakers lining the walls caused a collective “gasp” as all leapt briefly into the air. From somewhere silently appeared three beautiful young blond boys naked from the waist up, each taking position behind a drum-kit. Camera crews materialized from the crowd and began to shoot the motionless youths behind the drums for what seemed an eternity, flashes providing a shattered view of the scene. As would be expected (as planned presumably) the crowd became restless – hooting and clapping. Whatever it was everybody had come to see – now they really wanted it.

Suddenly appeared another waifish male figure sans shirt – the artist himself, but with the addition of a long black wig pulled forward over his face like an oversized version of the “devil lock” – the hair-do made famous by **Misfits’** singer **Glen Danzig**. That’s when the music started. Standing, kneeling and laying on the ground, this boy-demon began bellowing and yelling into microphone as the young attendees hammered out unsyncopated terror. Heavy with echo and reverb, the drums and vocals boomed out from every corner, swarming and wailing. And like a sonic blast, in a flash it was over.

*Sprungkopf* could be called song only by outsider noise-nerd standards – no word could be understood, no toe-tapping rhythm or melody. What was produced was a burst of energy styled with doom-couture, and orchestrated to massive effect. A boy-band from the nether shore of the Hades allowed a single blaring shriek on their whirlwind tour in the world of the living. The sound was fit for the noise scene proper and would not have been out of place performed at an event like NYC’s annual No Fun Fest, where enthusiasts gather to watch similar confusion drenched in boom and scary vibes. But where that world is often dominated by lo-fi DIYism and proud underground chic, with *Sprungkopf*, **Koh** packs this doom essence into ceremony and symbol – another dark exploration of his own private fantasy to be played out on the stage of high-art. He hit all the transitions and poses with finesse, leaving plenty of mystery to ponder about. Just, it could have been louder.

Eventually everybody figured out that the show was over. While the audience stood stunned and unsure of what to do next, **Javier Peres** und **Terence Koh** emerged from the back door of the building and piled quickly into the back of a black Mercedes Benz, then cruised off into the dark August night. Not an altogether unthinkable exit for two art-world rising stars, but importantly in this case – a fitting exit. There could be no sudsy hubbubbing following the preceding display of dishy confidence and total design. Playing himself as a dark phantom, **Terence Koh** appeared in a flash and was gone with a thunder – now you see him, now you don’t.