

AUTRE

IN XAVIER CHA'S "FEEDBACK" THE AUDIENCE ARE THE PERFORMERS @ 47 CANAL IN NEW YORK

November 20, 2015



When I entered 47 Canal, I immediately assumed that the metal bleachers in the otherwise empty gallery were an open invitation to take a seat, only to be gently ushered to the opposing wall by a smirking gallery staff. After a while a group of young people entered the gallery from a side door and started taking their seat on the bleachers, lightly chatting and exchanging cordial glances only to fall completely silent on the hour. The silence spread into the audience, the focused stares of the performers all gathering on the digital clock behind us. Out of nowhere, the performers erupted in cheerful screams and started hugging each other in ecstasy similarly as a crowd cheering on an iconic band or during a charismatic speaker. The laughs and screams ricochet off the empty walls and filled the entire room, sweeping the audience up in the excitement. The performers continued to change their reactions every 30 seconds, going from happy, to outraged over to embarrassed and completely stunned. Each emotion filled up the entire room, washing over the audience with such intensity that at times it felt as though the 18 people were actually laughing at us. With that sense of paranoia it became harder and harder to sit and watch the performed reactions, each laugh became accusatory and each open mouth became a judgment. It is this that truly characterizes Xavier Cha's work, the ability to channel unseen energies through an almost banal scene that makes her audience reflect on indivisible stimuli we face everyday. The work is a meditation on our own self-centeredness and shows how quickly we take other peoples reactions personally.

Xavier Cha's "Feedback" was on view from November 11 to November 15 at 47 Canal in New York. Images and text by Adriana Pauly