

Matt Sheridan Smith
Selected Works, 2007-2010

Best viewed in 2-page (spread) mode.
Not for print.

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Untitled (congratulations)

2007

Glass vases, irises delivered daily for the duration of the exhibition

Dimensions variable

Shown here: Day 1



Day 38



Self-portrait (golden sections)

2009

MDF, acrylic

Four parts:

7 x 11 x 18 inches; 9 x 15 x 24 inches; 11 x 17 x 28 inches; 16 x 26 x 42 inches

Installation view, Lisa Cooley Fine Art 2009

Self-portrait (golden sections), the “heart of the show” according to the gallery’s press materials, is a series of pedestals arranged in a sort of post-modern Stonehenge in the center of the room. Smith made each pedestal according to the “golden ratio,” measuring the proportions of his own body and transferring them to plywood. Though he literally puts himself on display, the various shapes and sizes still seem to conceal something essential about the artist, his process and the works’ import as stand-ins for the body.

- Marie-Adele Moniot, Art Lies, Summer 2009

**Email to Eric Fredericksen, curator at Western Bridge, Seattle, WA
January 2010**

Hi Eric,

So the drowning plinths are becoming more and more interesting in my mind. In particular I think this idea for the talk/publication is really rich, and super timely. Obviously this idea came out of a fascination with the life of an artwork after it's exhibition...about some kind of trajectory beyond exhibition->inventory->sales->archive. I was thinking a lot about the selling of art, and all the framework around this - image archives, inventory databases, availability spreadsheets, etc.- as the sort of default lifespan of an art object, and what else might be possible instead.

This isn't really meant as any kind of institutional or economic critique. It's really about the temporal dimension, or arc, of an artwork, and a reconfiguration of how one orders the points of intensity. About creating a situation where the most significant moment in the life of the work happens outside it's moment of display or exhibition. About it never really finding a resting point, or else if so, then an improbable one.

So in an indirect way it's a conversation about collecting, and collectors, since they often become the stewards, so to speak, for this "life after" that the artwork enters...but like I said I really want to make it a broader, maybe even sentimental, conversation about keeping things (or not), holding on to things (or not), saving things (or not) passing things on (or not). An example being, for instance, whether or not to keep an engagement ring if you get divorced (that's another key image for the water, this throwing the ring into the sea). Letting go, things like that.

In researching this more I came onto something really interesting, a great sort of framing image for the idea, this pretty much says it all:

*There is a technical difference between the two: jetsam has been voluntarily cast into the sea (jettisoned) by the crew of a ship, usually in order to lighten it in an emergency; while flotsam describes goods that are floating on the water without having been thrown in deliberately, often after a shipwreck.[1]
Generally speaking, jetsam is the property of the finder, while flotsam remains the property of its original owner.[citation needed]*

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flotsam_and_jetsam

It's all pretty timely given all the different ways the word "crisis" rolls off everyone's tongue right now. And all the reassessing that comes with that. What's worth saving? What's weighing us down? These vogueish questions. "Going overboard" is another lively image. So much to talk about.

As for the event, it all leads to a toast. Basically the Flotsam& Jetsam theme; the performance starts with a toast at some point over this seafood dinner. I'll sort of be up out of my seat, rambling on about different things, letting go, holding on, *vin naturel* as an unstable resistance to the archive, flotsam and jetsam, wedding rings, the giant octopus you mentioned, lifespans, preservation and collection, melancholy, these types of things, but starting and stopping a lot, ending a toast and starting another.

I'm writing the foundational text next week, won't be reading from it though; it should have a bit of verve, more improvised and unstable (my favorite word at the moment).

Best,

Matt





Seattle, 2010

Text by Chris Sharp, Knight's Move exhibition catalog, SculptureCenter NY 2010:

Matt Sheridan Smith

Pregnant with silence and absence, the work of Matt Sheridan Smith is no less full of language and a sense of loss. Such melancholic motifs are largely the byproduct of an interest in the erosion of the self and agency in an increasingly administrative, template-based culture, in which identity is organized according to models such as Facebook and Linkdin. These concerns are played out in a practice that comes to resemble kits, which are conceptually and formally predicated on the readymade. Here, however, the readymade functions not as an end in itself, but rather as a hypothetical point of departure, which, like all kits, comes replete with a set of (implicit) instructions. And any sense of loss engendered by the above-mentioned erosion is immediately countered by a latent, if ultimately unrealizable potential.

Consider for example *Neon sculpture (unbent)*, 2009. This aggressively banal-looking work consists of a collection of unbent neon tubes, partially sticking out of a box lying on the ground. The fact that one of them is illuminated signals their general anxiety to quite literally get bent -- to be relieved of their muteness and conform to language, any language, regardless of content. A stark and risible sense of surrogacy is foregrounded in other works such as in Smith's collaboration with Nikolas Gambaroff. Entitled, *Nowhere for Nothing (New York Stoop)*, 2007-10. This makeshift, portable wooden stoop, whose presence outside an exhibition is always complemented by a sculptural element inside the exhibition and a photocopied booklet of a history of the stoop, speaks to the disappearance of neutral urban spaces ungoverned by protocols of consumption. Other works, such as *Referencing materials (no more incandescent friends)*, 2009, fulfill a more discreetly elegiac function. Initially mistakable for a 'kit,' this piece is comprised of a neatly organized collection of packaged 75-watt incandescent light bulbs placed on a rectangular sheet of black velvet. It refers to the European ban on incandescent light bulbs (fully effective as of 2012), and the threat this poses to exhibiting art like that of Felix Gonzales Torres. Here, in an administrative twist of logic, legislation quite literally and indiscriminately proscribes artistic expression. And yet this piece is deeply affecting. Packaged and unused like this, the indifference of these bulbs to the art they will soon be forbidden to represent becomes incontestable, and a whole human drama seems to be unceremoniously trivialized, thus encapsulating a pathos and harried sense of agency lodged deep within Smith's practice.



Neon Sculpture (unbent)

2009

neon tubing, transformer, cardboard, ink, metal, plastic, string

6 x 12 x 96 inches



Referencing materials (no more incandescent friends)

2009

felt, paper, frosted incandescent bulbs banned by the EU

36 x 36 x 8 inches



Referencing materials (no joke no painting)

2010

Vinyl lettering, canvas, linen, photoflood lamp, one well-worn stool

48 x 68 x 26 inches

NOWHERE FOR NOTHING (New York Stoop)

Nikolas Gambaroff/Matt Sheridan Smith

FALL 2007 at GBE@Passerby, opening September 25th, 2007



Part 1 (Disambiguation page from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Stoop may refer to:

a dive toward prey by a bird of prey such as a [falcon](#). During a stoop the [raptor](#) folds its wings and makes its body shape as streamlined as possible. Although the stoop is still under control by altering the tail and extending a wing-tip when and where necessary. Towards the end of the stoop, the falcon swings its talons forward, ready to catch or hit its prey

[urban stoop](#), a small staircase leading to the entrance of an [apartment building](#) or dwelling in an [urban](#) or suburban setting

a pejorative term for a member of the [Social Democratic and Labour Party](#) of [Northern Ireland](#) (SDLP). Originally developed by those associated with [Provisional Sinn Féin](#) from an alternative translation of SDLP - Stoop Down Low Party, meant to indicate the SDLP's more conciliatory approach to dealing with the governments of the [UK](#) and [Ireland](#). It has since been taken back by the SDLP and their supporters, who use it as a personal, non-derogatory description.

a slang term for a stew containing no meat, instead made with beans, lentils and rice, and eaten by vegetarians. The term refers to it being neither a stew (due to no meat), nor a soup (as the beans, lentils and rice when combined are protein equivalents of meat, in terms of essential amino acid availability).

a person that is stupid, simply shortened to stoop.

Can be used as a noun, eg- "This person is a stoop-munger, they munger all the stoop," or "there's no stoop left for anyone else to munger."

a slang term for cigarettes used in Wilmington, Delaware (specifically in the areas between Arden, South Graylyn Crest and Fairfax).

Part 2 (Text Excerpt)

“The space we are describing is conceptually interstitial and physically proximate. The seam (or crack) is subjective, and the formal articulation objective. It is parasitic in duration and socially incidental. It exists as a proposition and is as such always an option, whether exercised or not. This potentiality defers first to the inside and then to the outside. It is outlined below and may be enacted according to a relatively loose set of minimum and maximum parameters. It may also be ignored – a consequence of said deferral with no actual bearing on questions of its existence, which are inextricably linked to the existence of the inside and outside that defined it in the first place.”



Nikolas Gambaroff and Matt Sheridan Smith

Nowhere for Nothing

PDF publication, plywood stoop

2007-ongoing



Installation view, GBE at Passerby 2007



Installation view, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 2009



Installation view, Art Dubai 2010



Installation view, SculptureCenter, Queens, NY 2010

Text by João Ribas for the exhibition brochure for Open/Shut at MIT List Center for the Arts, 2010:

New York-based artist Matt Sheridan Smith draws out the evocative potential of absences, silences, and pauses in his work. Often employing standardized or prescribed material, Smith joins coded, conventional forms with external or iterative content. Through such a generative rather than directly expressive practice, his work attempts to wrestle poetic effects out of seemingly banal content, technologies, or conventions.

Smith's ellipsis paintings, for example, have their composition set by the formatting conventions of Microsoft word. An ellipse thus acts as both a geometric device and a stand-in for any utterance: for a pause, a drift, an aside...Similarly, the artist makes use of the filler text of the printing and typesetting industry, Lorem Ipsum, a standard since the 1500s:

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

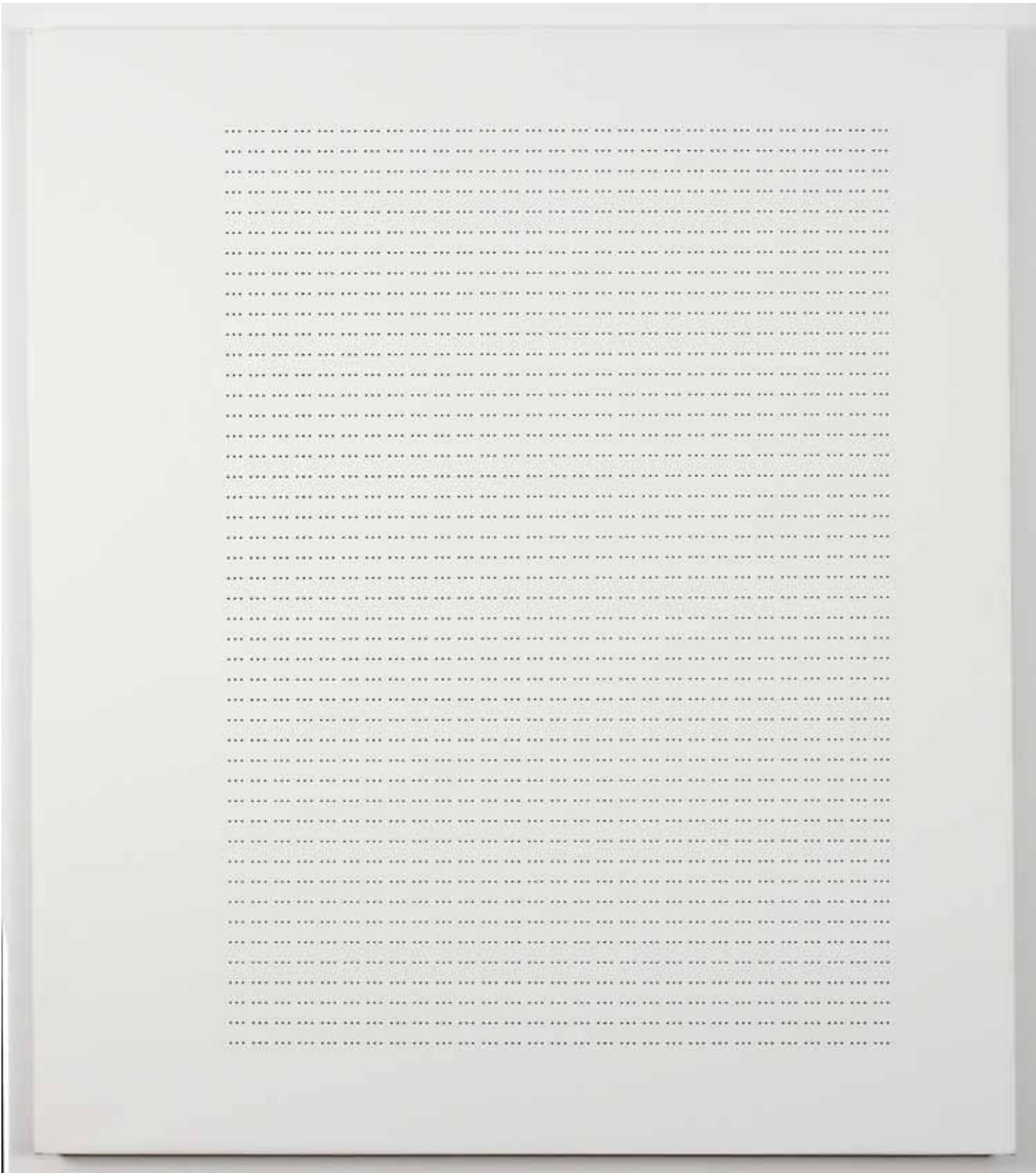
This now generic passage is in fact an edited version of a Latin text by Cicero:

Neque porro quisquam est qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit ("Neither is there anyone who loves grief itself since it is grief and thus wants to obtain it").

Surviving for centuries as a typographical standard, the tenebrous passage is continuously re-cut and reset as placeholder text by graphic designers, precisely in order to direct focus away from the semantic aspects of a text—precisely the kind operation Smith's work brings to the fore. Through such meditations on the nature of content and the labor of the artist, Smith's resulting readymades, blanks, and templates reveal the often-arbitrary yet poetic way in which originality, intention, and value are assessed. As the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé proposed, literature itself may mean nothing more than the infinity afforded by twenty-six letters.

Untitled (open/shut), 2008, consists of a seven-minute montage of actors opening and closing doors, culled from Robert Bresson's film, *L'Argent* (1983). Adapted from a short story by Leo Tolstoy, Bresson's film revolves around the tragic consequences of counterfeit banknotes. Refused an advance on his allowance by his father, a young man decides to use forged banknotes at a photography shop. On realizing the deception, the owner passes off the fake bills on to an unsuspecting serviceman. When he in turns attempts to use the counterfeit money, he is arrested for forgery, descending into a life of despair, and eventually, murder.

In Smith's re-composition of the film, characters endlessly pass through shops, cafés, homes, offices, prisons, elevators, and other interior or bureaucratic spaces, enforcing a latent narrative of containment, deception, and confinement. Through Smith's elision, what is brought to the surface is an almost perverse equation between circulation of money and freedom of movement. The repetitive action of entering and leaving turns interstitial moments--passing yet highly sublimated gestures of exchange, power, and class--into a choreography of clicks and slams, passageways and dead ends, claustrophobia and expectation.



Untitled (the omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied to make a construction grammatically complete)

2007



Stills from:

Untitled (open/shut)

2008

looped video projection

Duration 7 minutes 35 seconds

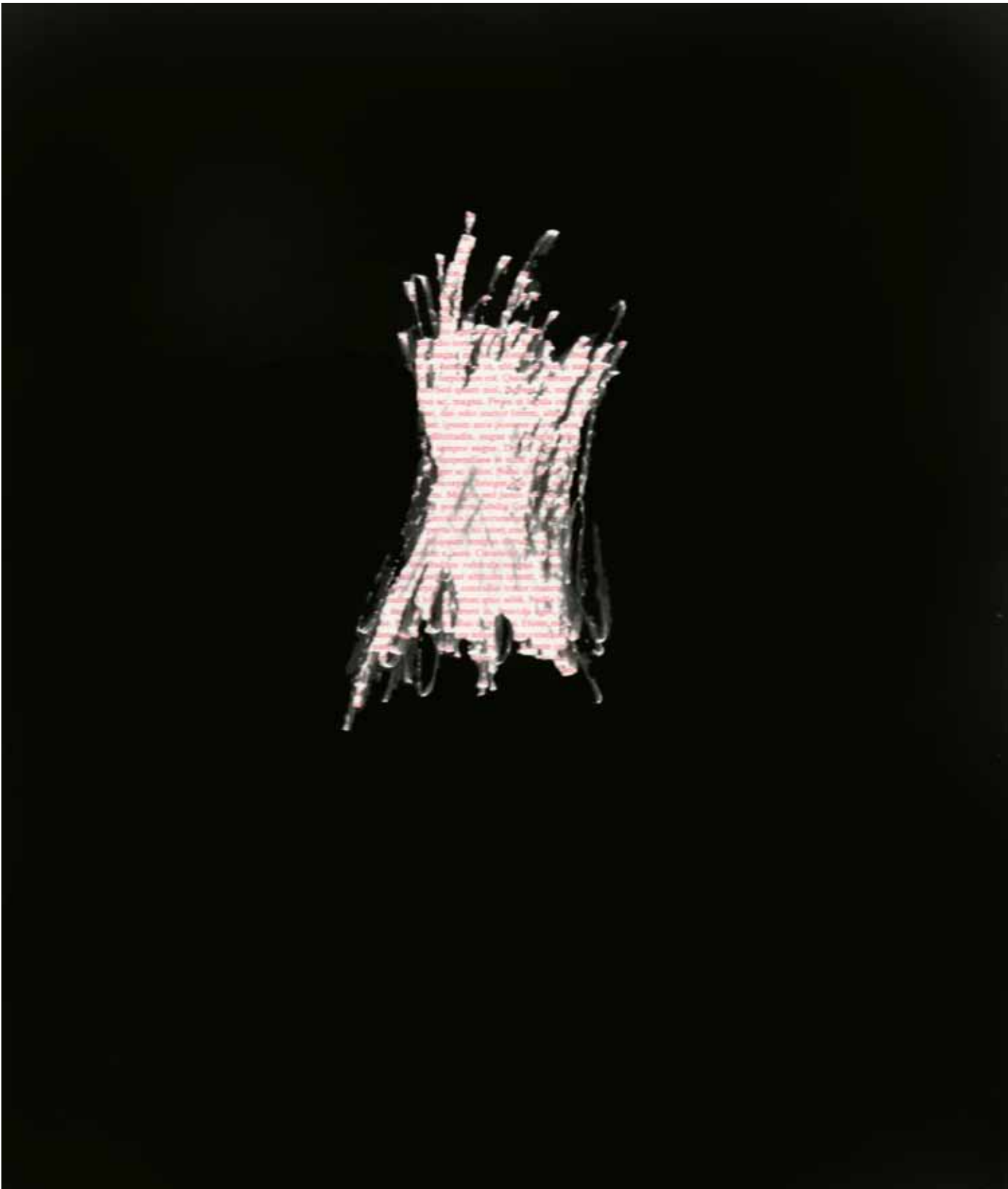




Matt Sheridan Smith: Blanks, Templates, Undos, Redos

2009

installation view

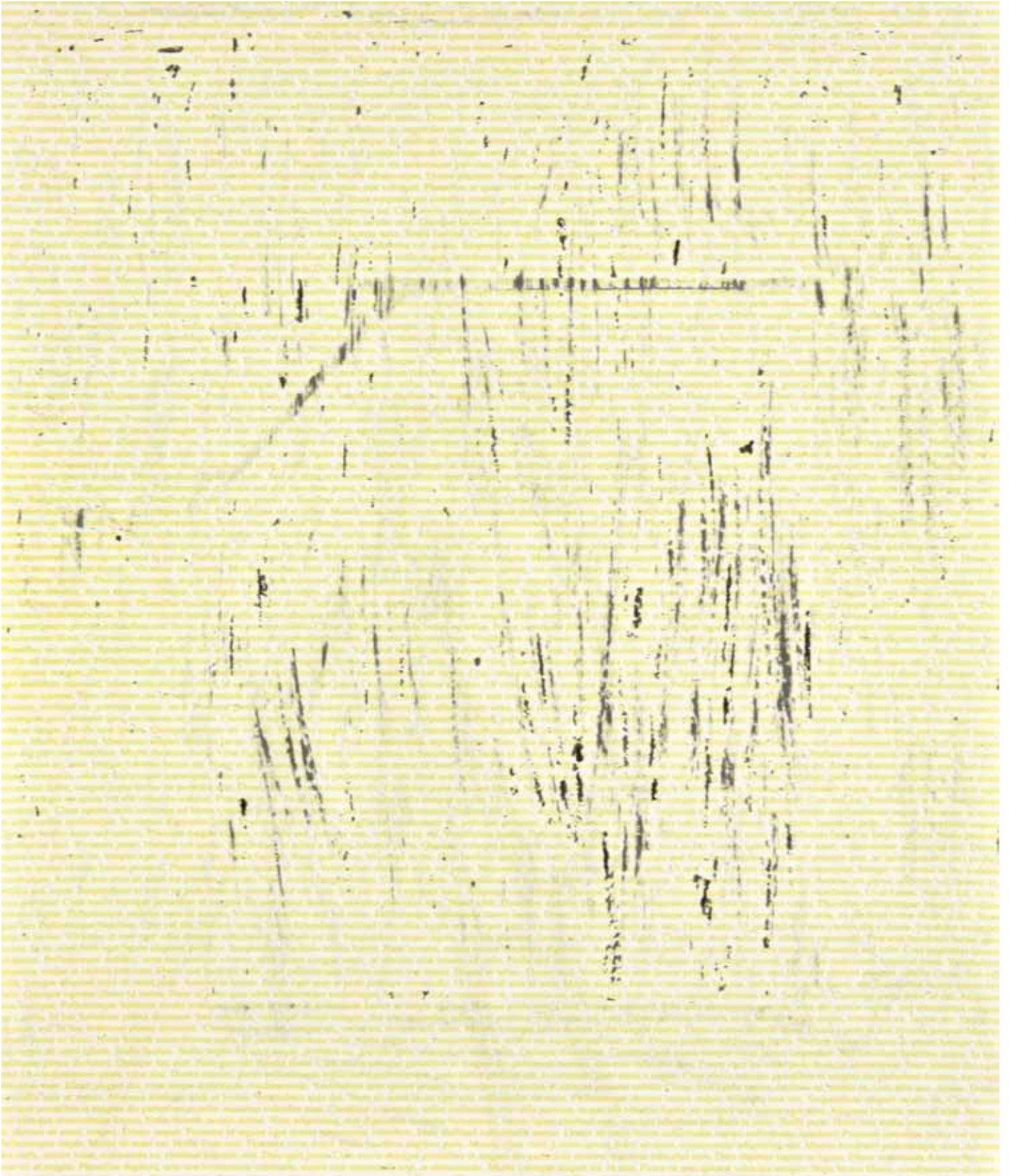


Neither is there anyone who loves pain itself (black/magenta)

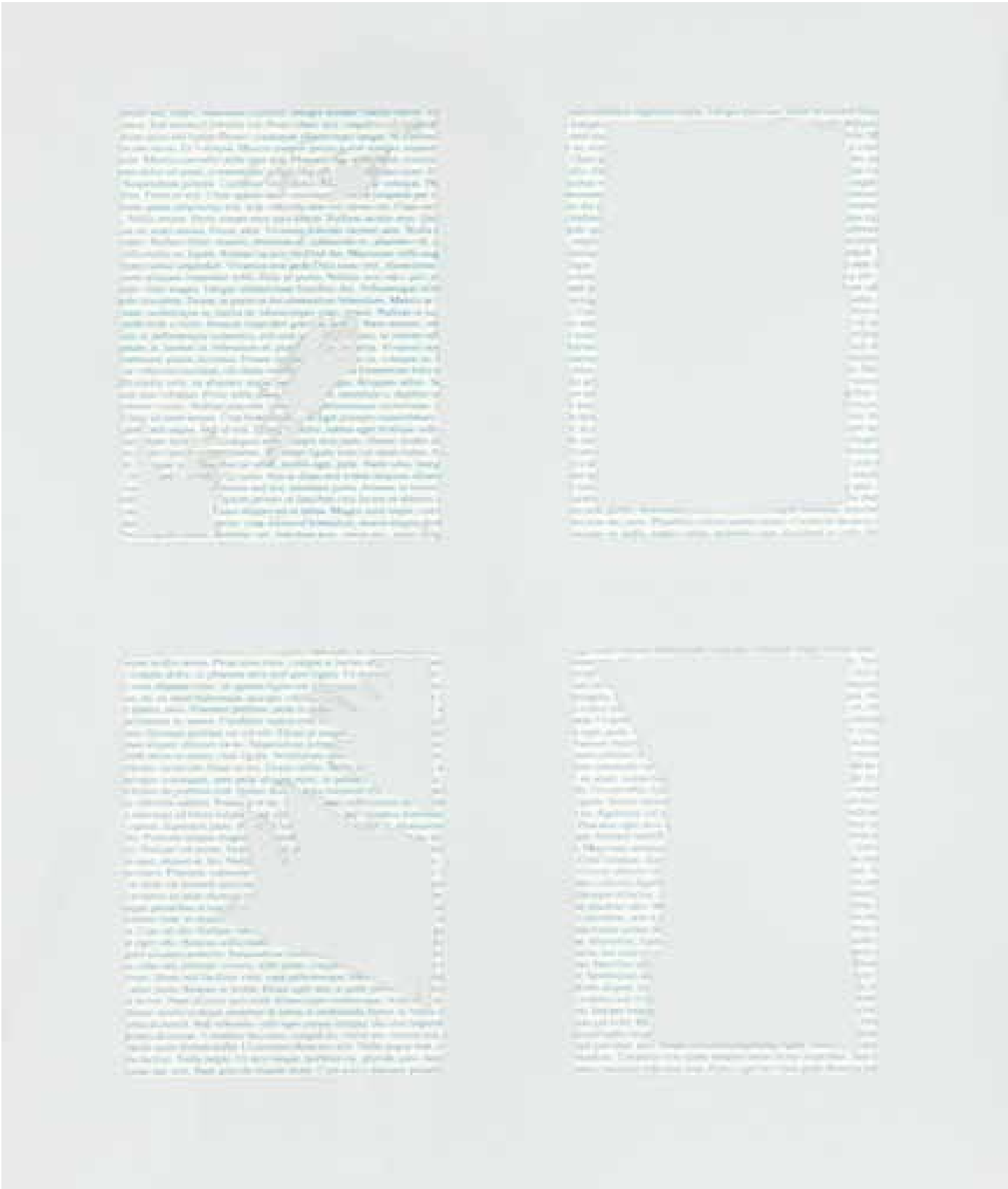
2009

screenprint and scratch off ink on paper

20 x 15 inches



Neither is there anyone who loves pain itself (black/yellow)
2009
screenprint and scratch off ink on paper
20 x 15 inches



Neither is there anyone who loves pain itself (gray/cyan)
2009
screenprint and scratch off ink on paper
20 x 15 inches



11
adrons pass underneath us in formation,
in purposeful manner, then saw A.A. bursts
11 Group wing and saw E/A 3,000 ft. below to the
Managed perfect approach with 19 and 611 between our
Hurricanes and sun, and E/A below and down-sun. Arrived
over E/A formation of 20 - 40 Do.17 noticed Me.109 dive out
of sun and warned our Spitfires to look out. Me.109
broke away and climbed S.E.

About to attack E/A which were turning left handed, i.e.
to West and South, when I noticed Spitfires and Hurricanes
(11 Group ?) engaging them. Was compelled to wait for a
risk of collision. However, warned wing to watch other
friendly fighters and dived down with leading section in
formation onto last section of 3 E/A. P/O Campbell
took left-hand Do.17, I took middle one and Sub.Lt. Cork
the right hand one, which had lost ground on outside of
turn. Opened fire at 100 yds in steep dive and saw a
large flash behind starboard motor of Dornier as wing
caught fire, must have hit petrol pipe or tank, ~~missed~~
overshot and pulled up steeply. Then carried on
and attacked another Do.17 but had to break away to avoid
Spitfire. The sky was then full of Spitfires and
Hurricanes, queuing up and pushing each other out of
the way to get at Dorniers which for once were outnumbered.

I squirted at odd Dorniers and close range as they
came into my sights but could not hold them in my sights
for fear of collision with other Spitfires and Hurricanes.

saw collision between Spitfire and Do.17 which
wrecked both aeroplanes. Finally ran out of ammunition
chasing crippled and smoking Do.17 into cloud.

It was the finest shambles I have been in since for
once we had position, height and numbers. E/A were a
dirty looking collection.

(signed) D.R.S. Bader

S/Ldr.



Three works, installation view *Knight's Move*, SculptureCenter, Queens, NY 2010



Hanging (Crashed slow-rolling near ground. Bad show.)

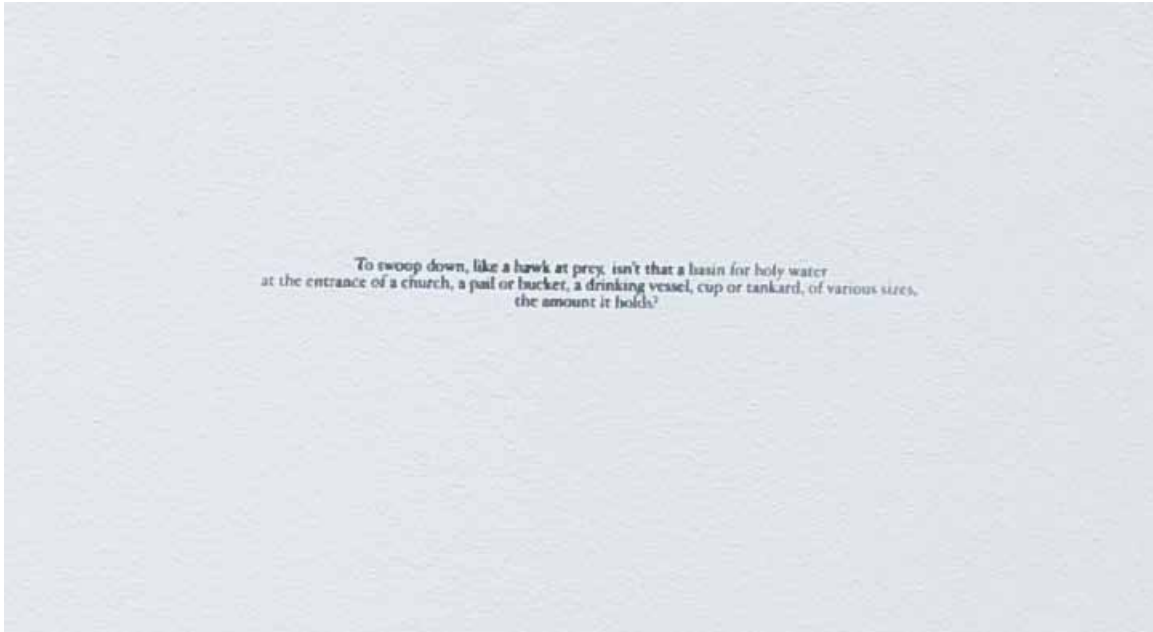
2010

Silk scarves

Approx. 80" x 10"



If you see something, say something else
2010
Kraft paper, wood stretchers
16" x 14"



Text by Fionn Meade from Knight's Move exhibition catalog:

[which] ...recalls another of Michel de Certeau's assertions regarding mobility and spatial authority that the act of telling makes possible: "The story's first function is to authorize, or more exactly, to be found...It even has distributive power and performative force (it does what it says) when an ensemble of circumstances is brought together. Then it finds spaces." Indeed, the founding of space through tactical maneuvering opens up room for interpretation, as in the work of Matt Sheridan Smith, which amounts to a perpetual disappearing act. Adopted from a game played by characters in Argentine writer Julio Cortazár's novel *Hopscotch* (published in English in 1966), Smith's newest text pieces – either screen printed directly on the wall or displayed as unfolded notes – bring together the lexical definitions of rare or often technical that either look or sound alike, wedding their articulations through a hypothetical conjunction and letting the words themselves recede. The poetic hybrids that result overturn the rhetorical procedures of conceptual art often evoked in Sheridan Smith's work. Instead of Joseph Kosuth's contention that "a work of art is a kind of proposition presented within the context of art as a comment on art", what we are left with: "A fit of fever or shaking chills, accompanied by malaise, pains in the bones, etc; chill, isn't that an army on a march, a throng, a crowd?" Having more in common with John Ashbery's melancholic, loosely system-generated self-portraits than the administrative gloss of dematerialized practices of the past, Sheridan Smith's texts rely on rhetorical devices that repeatedly make his references, which often include himself, disappear.

A wire netting fastened to the top of a smokestack of a locomotive to prevent large sparks from being discharged; a spark arrester,
isn't that pertaining to a coincidence of tides, or indicating a line connecting points at which high tide occurs at the same time?

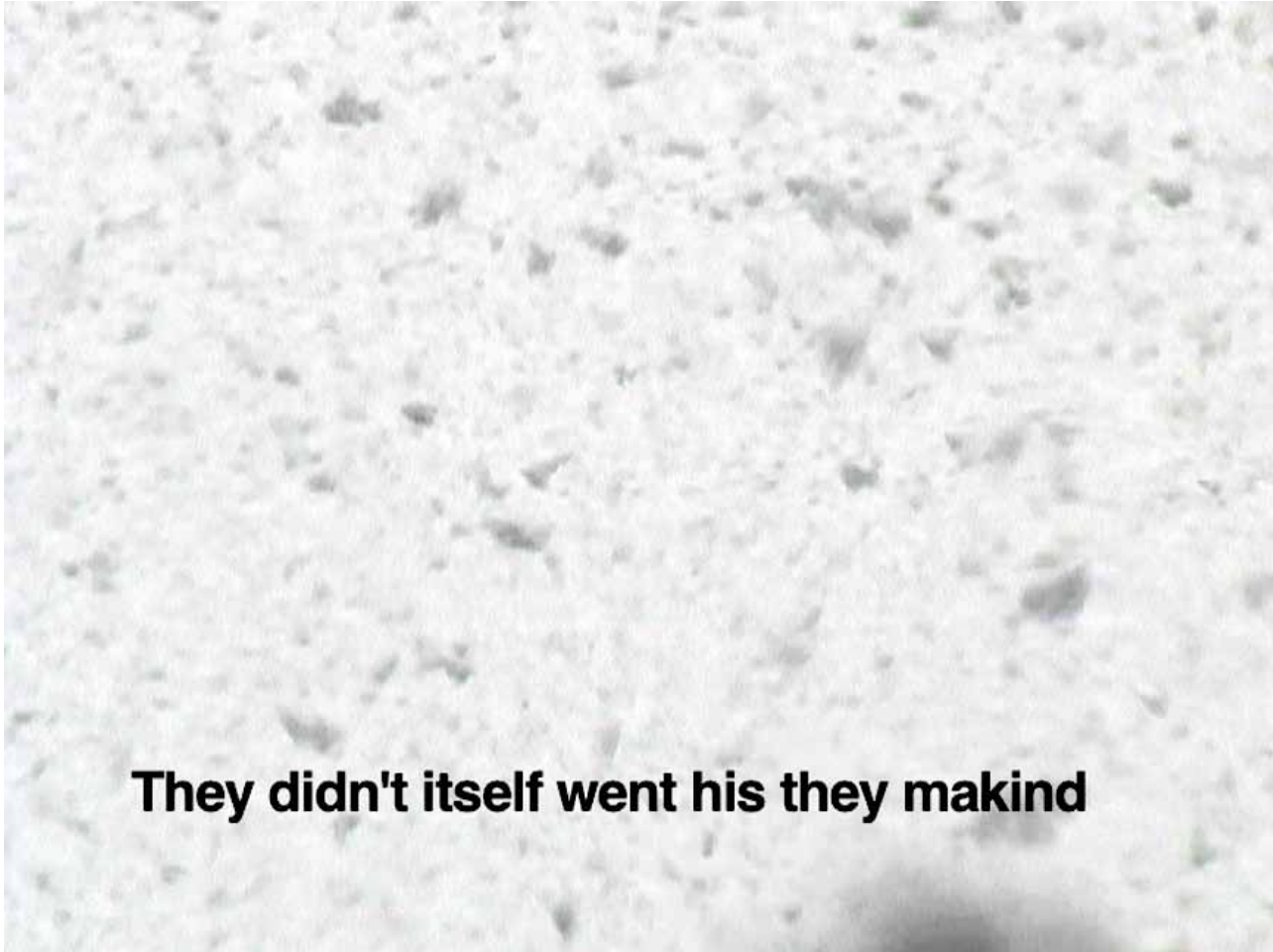
The forward edge of a fore and aft sail, to bring the head of a sailing vessel closer to or directly into the wind,
with sails shaking,
isn't that of or pertaining to tears, producing tears, indicative of weeping?

A fit of fever or shaking chills, accompanied by malaise, pains in the bones, etc; chill,
isn't that an army on the march, a throng, a crowd?

A curve generated by generated by the motion of a point on the circumference of a circle that rolls externally, without slipping,
on a fixed circle, isn't that the branch of physiology and anatomy dealing with secretion and the secretory glands?

The shaping of flint, chert, obsidian or other Conchoidal fracture stone to manufacture stone tools, strikers for flintlock firearms, or to produce flat-faced stones for building or facing walls, and flushwork decoration,
isn't that the the raised (fuzzy) surface on certain kinds of cloth, such as velvet?

To swoop down, like a hawk at prey, isn't that a basin for holy water at the entrance of a church, a pail or bucket, a drinking vessel, cup or tankard, of various sizes, the amount it holds?



Untitled (white noise)

2007

video, random generated text

13 mins. duration

An image of falling snow evocative of television static is subtitled by an online text generator that assembles incoherent blocks of words drawn and scrambled from Douglas Adam's Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Two random noises attempt to cohere into poetic result.



half someth a said by ansween in to hal,



to atmeans shad don't was the said



Reference and remanence (what remains of)

2009

Digital wallet-sized prints

2 parts, each 7 x 5 inches

On the left is the Mona Lisa, the world's most famous painting (so an image of "any" painting, or just "a" painting as well); The painting here stands in for itself, for painting, for art, and its own tradition of reference, how it's idea has been passed down and put away until its moment comes back up again. The format – wallet photos – is that of a more contemporary type of heirloom, something or someone to be remembered (loketts, a photo kept for years in a wallet with its story), passed on, shared, but again mostly put away until a certain moment. On the right, is an image of digital "remanence" (that's the technical term), eg what remains of an image (the Mona Lisa in this case) after it digitally decays. The horizontal bars result from the design of this memory chip itself, which represents some bits by the presence of charge and some by the absence of charge (also becomes: the moments in time when a reference is charged or not). The piece becomes about the possibility of transference and memory, comparing the half-life of the idea in an image to the half life of the image itself.

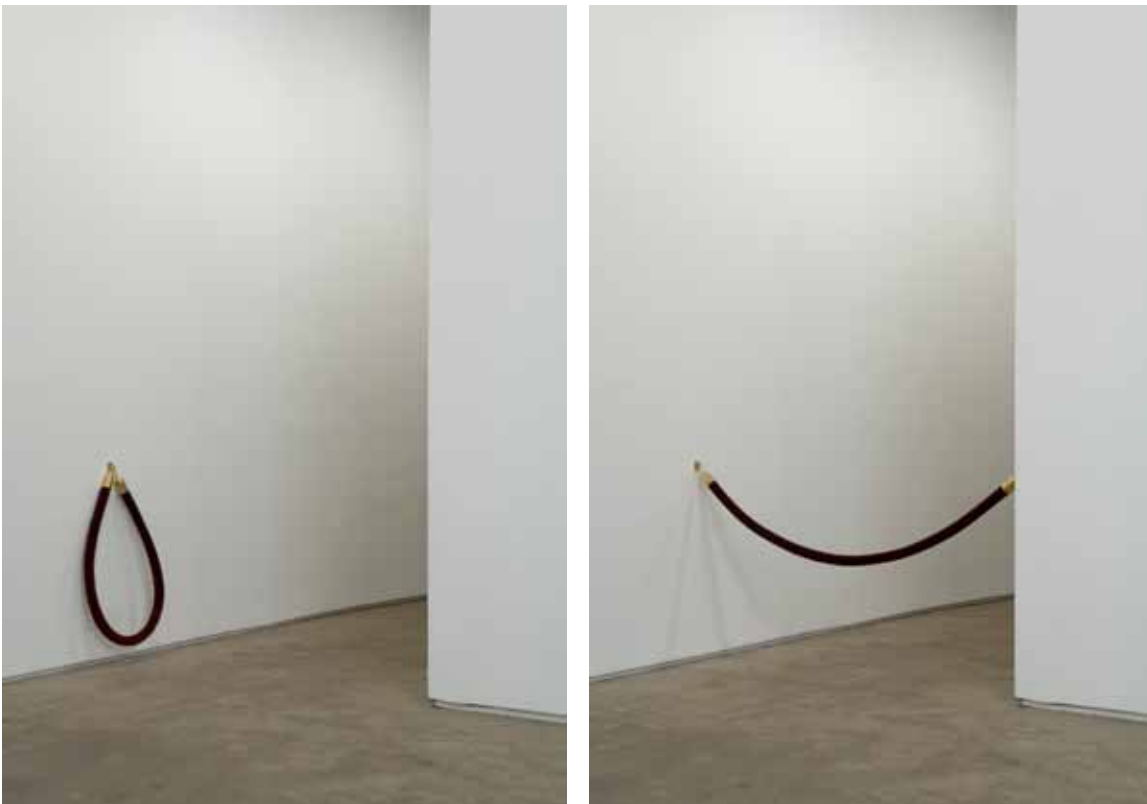


According to speculative logic (five portraits)

2008

inkjet prints of faces from world currency on paper, covered with scratch-off ink

5 parts: 12 x 9 inches each



Closed on Wednesdays (Collaboration with Eric Angles).

2007

Velour covered rope, brass hardware, empty project room.

Dimensions variable.

Installation view, Cohan and Leslie

