Reading as Art

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Carol Sommer
Nick Thurston
Ian Truelove

If they give you ruled paper, write the other way. (Juan Ramón Jiménez

in Bradbury 2004)[1]

The exhibition *Reading as Art* at Bury Art Museum and Sculpture Centre (27 August-19 November 2016) explored the potential of the act of reading as art.

The works included in the exhibition find different means to foreground and investigate the activity of reading: the forms it can take (silent reading, reading aloud, spontaneous reading, purposeful reading, and so on), the matter of reading (the book, the screen, the space of the page), the bodies that engage in it and the contexts in which it occurs. All of the works are concerned to make reading manifest in some way; in so doing, they each show – differently – how reading is its own form of making.

The philosopher Jacques Derrida used the term 'pedagogical intolerable' to describe the act of disrupting the linguistic reception and presentation of language. He stated that what the 'institution cannot bear is for anyone to tamper with language'.[2] This is the territory that this exhibition explores: we are going to tamper with language, its use, and misuse, its presentation and its reception. This exhibition is intent on playfully[3] disrupting the triangulation between meaning, support and context. It examines the materiality of words and the materiality of the ground on which they are inscribed, the context that frames their meaning, the margins, the edges and the borders. In this exhibition a number of international practitioners who explore this liminal territory have been gathered together. Collectively, this exhibition aims at achieving an engaging interplay between word, context and the medium of the page, at mapping the shift between the analogue and the digital, and furthering our understanding of how even the most resistant works can be read.
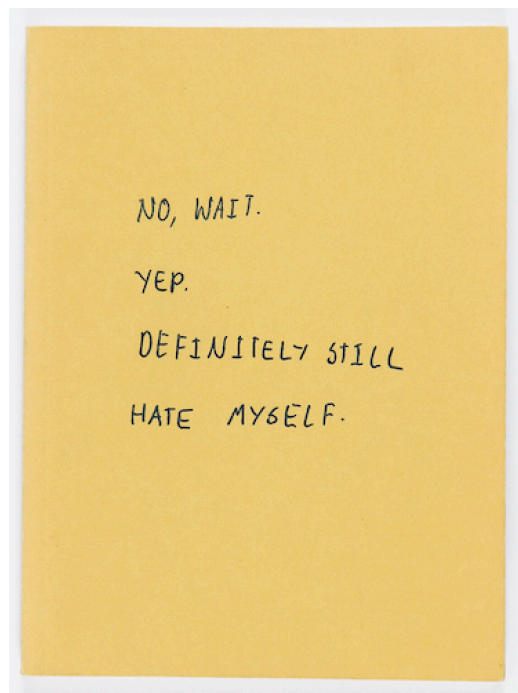
The exhibition examines two distinct bodies of work.

Part one

The obscenity of language

In the exhibition, one set of works explores the proliferation of language in the digital age. The cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard referred to an excess of information as the 'obscenity of language'.[4] He also used the term 'an ecstasy

of communication' for instances where information overload degenerates into incomprehensibility. Confronted by an excess of information, language falters, stumbles, repeats and challenges us to learn to read differently. This body of work is exemplified by the contributions from Rob Fitterman, Kenneth Goldsmith and Ian Truelove, and Carol Sommer. While the volume of words may at first appear overwhelming, these works also exploit the malleability of digitized text, and show how its signification can change when rapidly shifted from one context to another.

CASE STUDY ONE: Fitterman presents an audio recording of his poem *No, Wait: Yep: Definitely Still Hate Myself*, which was originally published by Ugly Duckling Presse in 2014.

Fitterman's book-length poem borrows its poetic form, loosely, from James Schuyler's *The Morning of the Poem* (1980), to orchestrate hundreds of found articulations of sadness and loneliness from blogs

and online posts. A collective subjectivity composed through the avatar of a singular speaker emerges. But the real protagonist of *No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself* is subjectivity as a mediated construct – the steady steam of personal articulations that we have access to are personal articulations themselves already mediated via song lyrics, advertising, or even broadcasters. *No, Wait…* blurs the boundary between collective articulation and personal speech, while underscoring the ways in which poetic form participates in the mediation of intimate expression.[5]

For example, from the start, teenage angst pervades the poem:

I'll just start: no matter what I do I never

seem to be satisfied,

The world spins around me and I feel like

I'm looking in from outside.

I go get a donut, I sit in my favorite part

of the park, but that's not

The point: the point is that I feel socially

awkward and seem to have

Trouble making friends, which makes me very

sad and lonely indeed.

I am way too sensitive and always feel like

no one likes me.

I don't know what to do—I'm just super tired

of feeling this way.

I used to really like people—I wasn't always

imagining the Coney Island

Roller-coaster ride as, you know, a metaphor

for my life! (Fitterman 2014: 1)

However, despite the general content being one of teenage despair, the poem

also includes some acute sociological observations on loneliness, such as:

I used to live alone and it never struck me

as particularly odd

If you've been in New York for any length

of time, you know from both

Intuition and daily observation that many people live

on their own in this town.

But I never fully appreciated how many, and by

extension, how colossally banal

My own solitary arrangement was until I checked with

The Department of City Planning

A couple of months ago. How many apartments in Manhattan

would you have guessed

Have just one occupant: one of every eight? Every four?

every three? The number is

One of every two! Of all 3,141 counties in the United States,

New York County is the

Unrivaled leader in single-individual households at 50.6 percent.

More than three-quarters

Of the people in them are below the age of 65,

and 57 percent are female.

In Brooklyn, the overall number is considerably lower at

29.5 percent, and Queens at 26.1

But on the whole, in New York City, one in three homes

contains a single dweller,

Just one lone man or woman who flips on the coffeemaker

in the morning, and switches

Off the lights at night. These numbers should tell

an unambiguous story;

They should confirm the belief about our city,

which is that New York is an

Isolating, cold hearted sort of place. Maybe that's why

Mark Twain called it: 'a splendid desert –

A domed and steepled solitude, where the stranger is lonely

in the midst of a million of his race'. (Fitterman 2014: 14–15)

CASE STUDY TWO: Kenneth Goldsmith presents *Seven American Deaths and Disasters*, from 2013. Goldsmith created a series of prose poems that encapsulated seven pivotal moments in recent American history: the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy and John Lennon, the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster, the Columbine shootings, 9/11 and the death of Michael Jackson. The exhibition includes all seven texts as seven digital screen works in series. For this exhibition, I invited the creative technologist Ian Truelove to create an algorithm that presents the texts on the

digital screen as if they were being continually live-typed, accompanied by the
artificial sound of a typewriter.

As all seven tragedies will be presented simultaneously, the audience will
experience a cacophony of typewriters, hammering out bad news:

[m]y thanks to all of you and it's on to Chicago and let's win there.

We want Bobby! We want Bobby! We want Bobby! We want Bobby!

Senator. How are you going to counter Mr. Humphrey in his, uh,
backgrounding you as far as the delegate votes go?

Senator Kennedy has been… Senator Kennedy has been shot! Is that
possible? Is that possible? It could… Is it possible, ladies and
gentlemen? It is possible he has… not only Senator Kennedy… Oh my
God! Senator Kennedy has been shot. And another man, a Kennedy
campaign manager. And possibly shot in the head. I am right here.

Rafer Johnson has a hold of a man who apparently has fired the shot. He has fired the shot. He still has the gun. The gun is pointed at me right at this moment. I hope they can get the gun out of his hand. Be very careful. Get that gun! Get the gun! Get the gun! Stay away from the gun!

Get the gun! Stay away from the gun! His hand is frozen. Get his thumb! Get his thumb! Get his thumb! Take a hold of his thumb and break it if you have to! Get his thumb! Get away from the barrel! Get away from the barrel, man!

Watch it with the gun. Watch it with the gun!

Look out for the gun! Okay. Alright. That's it, Rafer! Get it! Get the gun, Rafer!

Get the gun! Get the gun! Okay now hold onto the guy! Get the gun! Get the gun! Hold on to him! Hold on to him!

Ladies and gentlemen, they have the gun away from the man. They've got the gun. I can't see… I can't see the man. I can't see who it is. Senator Kennedy, right now, is on the ground. He has been shot. This is a… this is… What is he? Wait a minute. Hold him! Hold him! Hold him! We don't want another Oswald! Hold him Rafer, we don't want

another Oswald! Hold him, Rafer! Keep people away from him! Keep

people away from him! (Goldsmith 2013: 43–44)

CASE STUDY THREE: Carol Sommer presents a site-specific installation in

the gallery alongside her new book, *Cartography for Girls* (2016).

In this work, Sommer identifies, collates and maps, without hierarchy, all of

the experiences of female consciousness depicted in all of author Iris

Murdoch's 26 novels, which were originally published between 1954 and

1995. While there are many ways of thinking about what might constitute

female experience, Sommer borrows and reflects on Murdoch's own

philosophical thinking and the latter's warnings about the dangers of

classification. Using the indexical, abecedarian logic of the Geographer's A–Z

Street Atlas – a British mapmaking institution – *Cartography for Girls* (2016)

charts the strong connections between truth and love through direct quotation.

In *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992), Murdoch describes loving as 'an

orientation, a direction of energy, not just a state of mind'. Individual

consciousness, she tells us, is ultimately truth seeking; therefore, 'what we

attend to, how we attend and whether we attend' is an integral part of moral activity. While Murdoch clarifies that not all states of consciousness are evaluating (or can be evaluated), it is the thoughts of her fictional female characters that Sommer has collated as 'orientations' in *Cartography for Girls* (2016). For example, from the section that gathers together all the sentences beginning with the letter 'S':

> She looked brave. She looked down at it as from an eminence. She looked down at the sunny street through sudden tears. She looked forward to her company. She looked in the mirror and the sight of her terrible face brought on more tears. She looked into her dressing-table mirror, at her beautiful hair and her distorted face, and for a moment opened her eyes wide and resumed her old insistent animated look which said 'like me, like me'. She looked into his face, and whereas before she had seemed to see only the luminous eyes and the tender mouth, she now saw his expression which was quizzical, almost humorous. She looked into the dazzling fire and dug her fingers into the corners of her eyes. She looked into the heart of it. She looked like a mad creature, transformed, grimacing, her eyes staring with terror and horror. She looked like the head of a woman's college, an eminent doctor, a scholar, all the things she might have been and ought to have been and was not. She looked much older, but beautiful in a dreadful way. She looked not ten but twenty years younger and more beautiful than she had ever looked in her life. She looked out into the close black emptiness and her heart seemed like a bird ready to break from her

breast and fly over the quiet Marsh, to Dungeness, to the sea. She looked over his head at the beautiful, perky, ordinary, selfish, material world of motor-cars and evening appointments as she closed the door. She looked plump and tall and desperately old-fashioned and awkward. She seemed to Emily like a being from another era, and it was hard to imagine how they could both inhabit the same moment of time. She looked very unhappy. She looked with a sort of amazement at the collection of food, at the half-open door of the fridge, at her own half-finished drink. She looked years younger. She lost consciousness. She loved Blaise, in all this, very much and felt close to him, though without this love and this closeness including any conception of the future. She loved Carel and she could not love anyone else. She

loved her father and she had loved him only. She loved her husband and her son and her brother and carried every discontent into the light of that love to be consumed. She loved him with a quiet undemanding hopelessness. She loved him, but she could do nothing with her love. She loved his orders. She loved Hood House, loved tending it and embellishing it and feeling proud of it, and she only wished she could somewhere find her stepfather, if the old swine was still alive, and let him see the stylish way she lived now in a real gentleman's residence. She loved John Robert. She loved Mischa. She loved Monty, and could not remain silent or make little of it. She loved the golden boy who could not say a cross word, she chose peace; but not on the terms expressed by her mother who said, 'always give in to men, they are physically stronger' (advice which the poor woman did

not always follow). She loved the particular silence which the stilled life of flowers could give to a room. She loved the people who surrounded her and felt a little thrill at the special sense, on her return, of their need for her, a tiny spark as at the resuming of an electrical connection. She loved Tim with passion, with tenderness, with laughter and tears, all the accumulated intelligent forces of her being; although there were times when she was rational enough to ask herself, well, and what follows from that? She loved Tim, his childishness, his gaiety, his wry humility, his animal playfulness, his love for her, his talent (for she believed in this), his lack of pretension, or ambition, or affectation, or dignity. She made a gesture, touching her breast with a closed hand, then opening

the hand and stretching it towards him. She made an effort and stood up on her own. She made her home her fortress where she was secure and content to be invisible. She made her own clothes and dressed with a smartness so unobtrusive as to render her (he told her) almost invisible. She made it return again and again. She made this discovery with a mixture of relief, horror, and grotesque amusement. She made up her face through solitary afternoons. She managed a smile. She managed to sit down on a chair. She married him a little for his money. She married him because he was so wonderfully more grown-up than her thin neurotic art-student friends. She married him for a certain integrity and nobility of character which she saw in him. She married him for his good taste and his flat in Knightsbridge. She married, finally, because of the demonic intensity of Paul's desire for her. She meant to say to him, I don't believe you. She measured now

how far the concept of happiness had not been   burnt out of her.

She met his name before him and thought it a strange lovely name,

        and she was glad to meet its eccentric owner. She might even

now, she felt, go back to teaching in a school. She might go abroad

somewhere, leaving no address. She might have drowned in Cumbria

before Gertrude's eyes, she might have set off some new and awful

causal chain by taking hold of Peter's hand. She might have prayed to

God to dissolve the obsession and to show her simplicity if only she

had believed in Him. She might regret having come, but would surely

much more terribly regret not having come. She might have to witness

that. She missed him hideously, and yearned for him with a violent

fruitless yearning which was a kind of maimed falling in love. She

missed his presence with a detailed yearning. She mistook, at first, her

warmer feelings for protectiveness, even pity. She moaned aloud with

desire for the return of her husband, so that she could console and

reassure him and herself. She moaned now and wept freely, her

hands over her nose and open mouth, gazing at her crumpled face in

the mirror. She mopped her eyes, feeling the relief of a more general

sadness. She mourned Gregory's absence and was permanently

wounded by his imprudent marriage to that pert Judith Craxton child.

She moved about mechanically and her teeth chattered with a localized

self-pity. She moved away, coming apart from him with a kind of

horror, as if a human limb were to break off, softly, easily, in a dream.

She moved first; but Marian knew afterwards that she had moved too,

impelled by some immediate irresistible magnetism towards the purple dressing gown. (Sommer 2016)
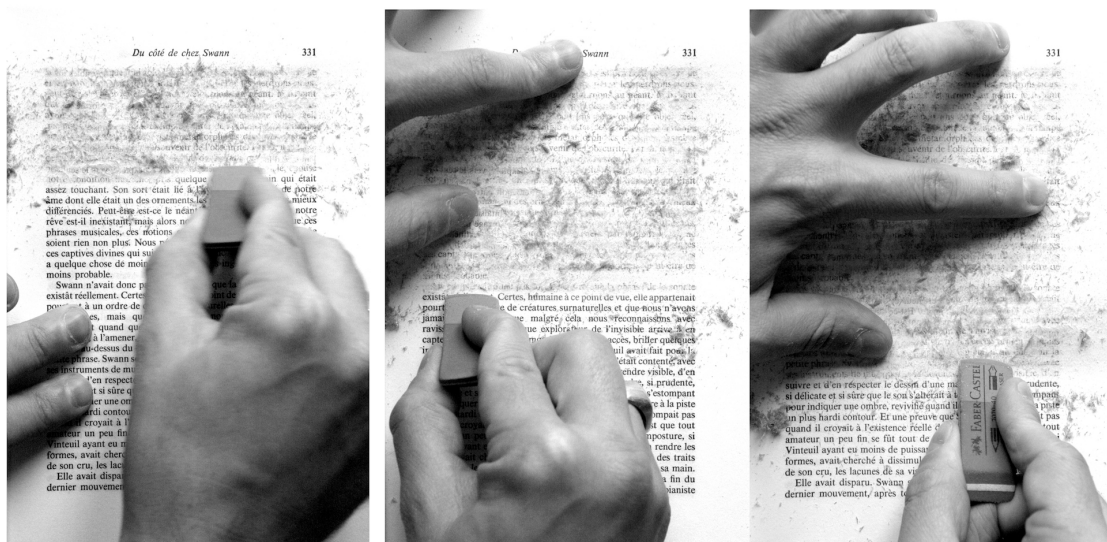
Part two

The infrathin

The second set of works all revolve around paper, the surface of writing, the materiality of the ground and its physical size while playfully and purposefully removing language. I'm fascinated by works that seem to ask only that they're not read. I like to think about what Marcel Duchamp terms 'the infrathin', the point at which one can just barely begin to perceive a threshold between two states. As Craig Dworkin refers to in his book *No Medium*:

> [t]he concept, Duchamp insisted, could not be directly defined but could be elaborated through examples: the moment between the report of a gun and the appearance of a bullet hole; the temperature change in a seat that has just been vacated; the volumetric difference between the air displaced by a clean shirt and the same shirt after it has been worn; the noise made by corduroy pants rubbing together when one moves; the impression formed between two sides of a thin sheet of paper… something to be studied! (2013: 17–18)[6]

Something to be studied indeed and many of the works in this exhibition address this liminal state. But when almost all language has been removed or erased, the works seem to speak more clearly than ever. As Dworkin notes: '[e]rasures obliterate, but they also reveal; omissions within a system permit other elements to appear all the more clearly' (2013: 9).

CASE STUDY FOUR: In Jérémie Bennequin's *Albertine Disparue*, the artist presents six out of the seven volumes that made up his complete work *ommage À la recherche du temps perdu* (2005–15). In *ommage À la recherche du temps perdu* (2005–15) the artist erases the work of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*, 1913) for a period of ten years, from 2005 to 2015. As a self-imposed constraint Bennequin erased a page a day with an ink rubber.

He slowly and methodically worked through the white edition of this work, which was published by Gallimard in a series of seven volumes. Once erased, the fragments of the deleted text were scanned and then republished. The reprinted ruined text includes scattered letters, solitary syllables, fragments of
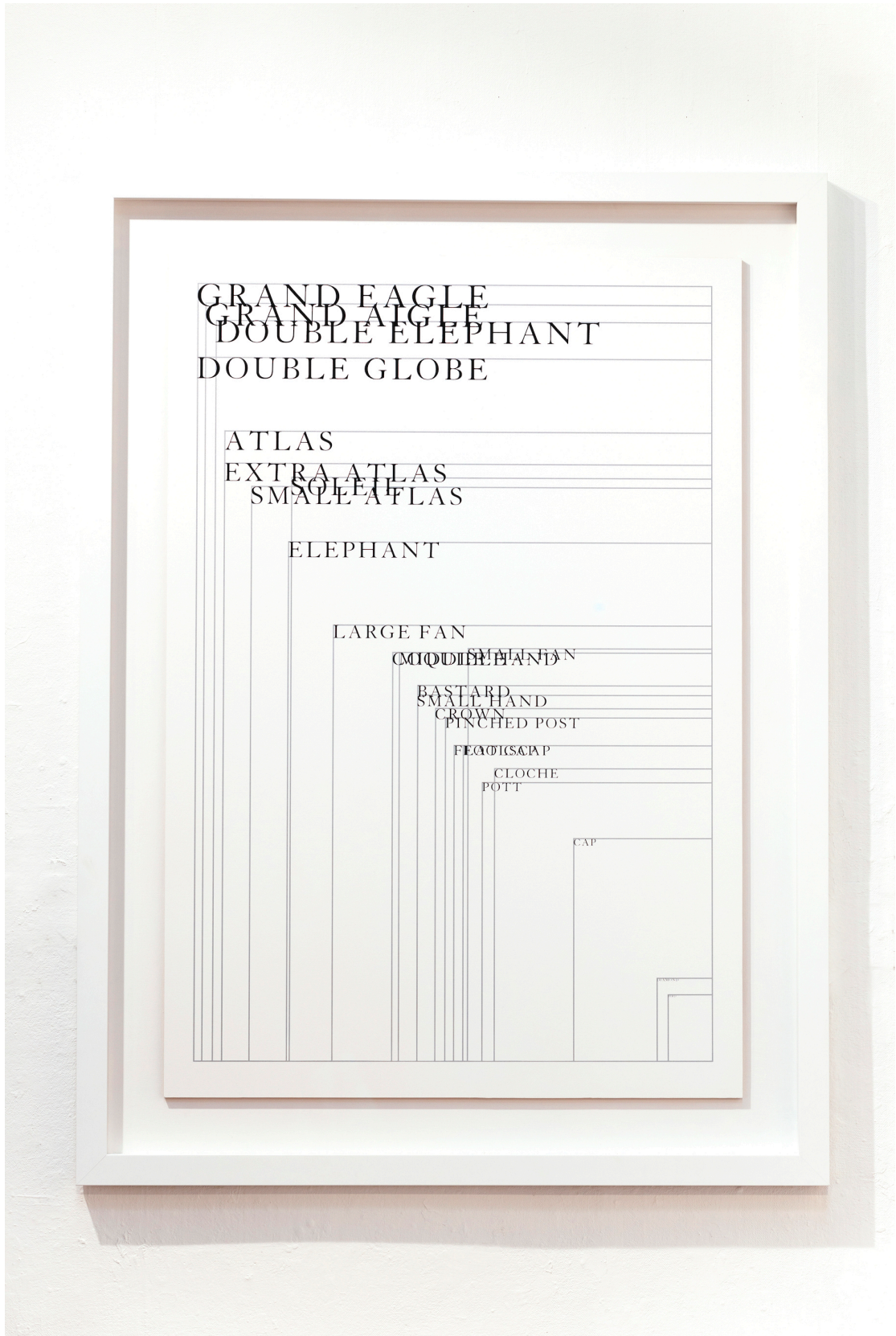
sometimes entirely legible words, glimpses of sentences and even scraps of thoughts.

His work includes the erased pages, the shavings left over from the exhausted ink rubber and a manual of instructions, carefully detailing the correct approach to making a work like this.

One volume of Proust's work has been purchased by an art collector and so, consequently, Albertine is absent from this particular instantiation of Bennequin's work. Alongside the erased pages and rubber shavings is a one hour, twenty minute film made by Rob Lavers from Paris, documenting Bennequin as he goes about erasing a single page of Proust's 3000-page novel.

CASE STUDY FIVE: Kate Briggs exhibits *Paper Size Poems* (2016), which

presents a poster template of the now obsolete paper sizes that were once

used for writing, drawing, wrapping and printing across Europe prior to the introduction of the standard 'A' series in the 1960s and 1970s. The names of these erstwhile paper sizes are strange, unlikely, and often quite beautiful: Grand Eagle, Atlas, Elephant, Soleil, Large Fan, Middle Hand, Coquille, Bastard, Small Hand, Crown, Pinched Pott, Flat Cap, Foolscap, Pott, Cloche, Cap, Diamond and Bird, etc. Briggs' project is to present these formats for viewing and handling: if each one is potentially a 'poem', it is because she is interested in the relationship produced between the scale, the material, the name and its other referents.
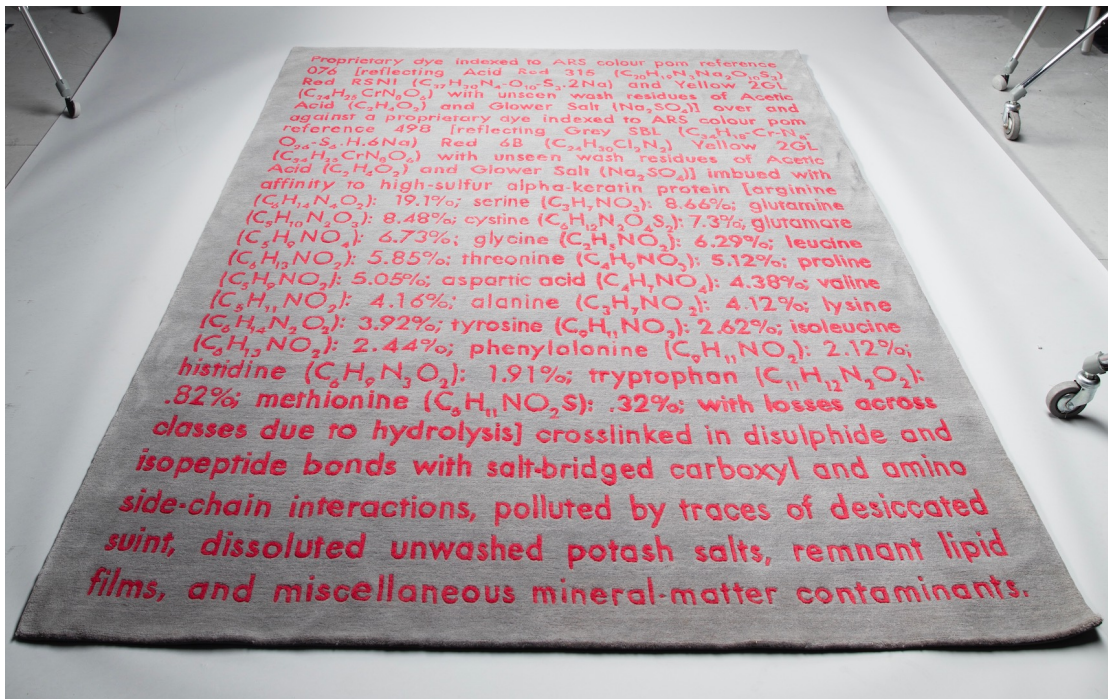

CASE STUDY SIX: Pavel Büchler exhibits *Writing Lesson* (1998), a found flash card, originally from an educational set for students, with the word 'read' on it. With a play on the discrepant pronunciations of the past and present tense, Büchler invites the reader to read the word 'read'.

CASE STUDY SEVEN: Martin Creed exhibits *Work no.88* (1995) a sheet of A4 paper crumpled into a ball. Creed takes a flat two-dimensional piece of paper and turns it into a three-dimensional object, making a simple but brilliant artwork from the most minimal of sculptural gestures.

CASE STUDY EIGHT: Craig Dworkin presents his entire corpus of thirteen

facts for the very first time in a book that was specially commissioned for this exhibition, *Twelve Erroneous Displacements and a Fact* (2016). Dworkin's FACT series is an exact list of ingredients that make up the constituent components of the object, hence the blunt title of the work. It's a self-reflexive, deconstructed meditation on the act of writing and of publishing, with an emphasis on the materiality of language. Each time Dworkin displays the poem he researches the medium on which it is being viewed, and changes the list of ingredients. It is a flexible work in progress, sometimes manifesting itself as a list of the ingredients that make up photostatic toner on a sheet of copier paper and sometimes appearing as a rug, hand-knotted on a loom using traditional methods by weavers in Pokhara in Nepal, using Himalayan wool, Chinese silk and Swiss Clariant dyes. It is exactly what it says it is – the idea is written on and through the material form. For example, here is one of Dworkin's thirteen facts that was sent out as the invitation card to the exhibition private view and is also on display in the museum. This text records the relative molecular weights of the neurotransmitters activated when it is read.

Voltage-gated axon scaffolds and cell-body synapses accommodating: glutamate [$C_5H_9NO_4$]: 47.75%; γ-aminobutyric acid [$C_4H_9NO_2$]: 28.85%; aspartate [$C_4H_7NO_4$]: 14.50%; sodium [Na]: 2.15%; calcium [$Ca2$]: 1.65%; acetylcholine [$C_7H_{16}NO+2$]: 1.25%; nitric oxide [NO]: 1.20%; potassium [K]: 1.05%; neuropeptide Y [$C_{190}H_{287}N_{55}O_{57}$]: .90%; glycine [$C_2H_5NO_2$]: .65%; cholecystokinin [$C_{166}H_{261}N_{51}O_{52}S_4$]: .025%; noradrenaline [$C_8H_{11}NO_3$]: .0125%;

somatostatin [C76H104N18O19S2]: .0005%; alanine [C3H7NO2], cystathionine [C7H14N2O4S], histamine [C5H9N3], substance P [C63H98N18O13S], and vasoactive intestinal peptide [C147H237N43O43S]: approximately .0001%, respectively; suspicions of extracellular magnesium [Mg++]; neurotensin remnants [C78H121N21O20]; vestigial traces of oxytocin [C43H66N12O12S2] and serotonin [C10H12N2O]; indications of corticotropin-releasing factors [C208H344N60O63S2]; relic enkephalins [C28H37N5O7]; fugitive endorphins [C158H251N39O46S]; vasopressin spoors [C46H65N15O12S2]; the lees of secretin [C130H220N44O39], receding, washes of pre- and post-synaptic proteins; background films of adenosine monophosphate [C10H14N5O7P], adenosine triphosphate [C10H16N5O13P3], and dipeptidyl aminopeptidase [C19H26N6O3·2HCl]; fumes, diffusive, of carbon monoxide [CO] and nitric acid [HNO3]; proline [C5H9NO2], taurine [C2H7NO3S], and tyrosine [C9H11NO3], ghosting; a residue of dopamine [C8H11NO2], proleptic, depending. (Dworkin 2016)

CASE STUDY NINE: As a near perfect expression of the infrathin and
Duchamp's exhortation to examine the 'impression formed between two sides

of a thin sheet of paper', Tom Friedman made a new work for the *Reading as Art* exhibition at Bury Art Museum, 27 August – 19 November 2016. Inspired by his celebrated 1992 sculpture, *A Piece of Paper*, (1992) in which a single sheet of US Letter paper (28 x 22 centimetres), the US office/home stationary standard was aligned with exact congruence on top of a plinth with a base that also measured 28 x 22 centimetres, I commissioned Friedman to make *A Piece of Paper, ISO [1]edition* (2016). In this work, a piece of ISO A4 paper (29.7 x 21 centimetres), the International (bar Canada and the United States of America) office/home stationary standard is aligned with exact congruence on top of a plinth with a base that also measures 29.7 x 21 centimetres. Friedman requested the height of the plinth to be 78.8cm from the floor. One of my favourite moments in curating this exhibition occurred when I was installing the selected works. Susan Lord, a curator form Bury Art Museum came up to me and asked where the Tom Friedman piece was. I told her she was standing right next to it. The plinth with the piece of paper is so minimal, that many people would not realise there was anything on the plinth at all. Without careful observation, it would appear to be a completely empty, unused plinth. However, our photographer Ricky Adam did a superb job photographing the work in which the precise razor-sharp edge of the ordinary photocopy paper is seen in sharp relief to the seemingly roughly textured surface of the plinth.

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[1] The ISO is the International Organisation for Standardisation, www.iso.org
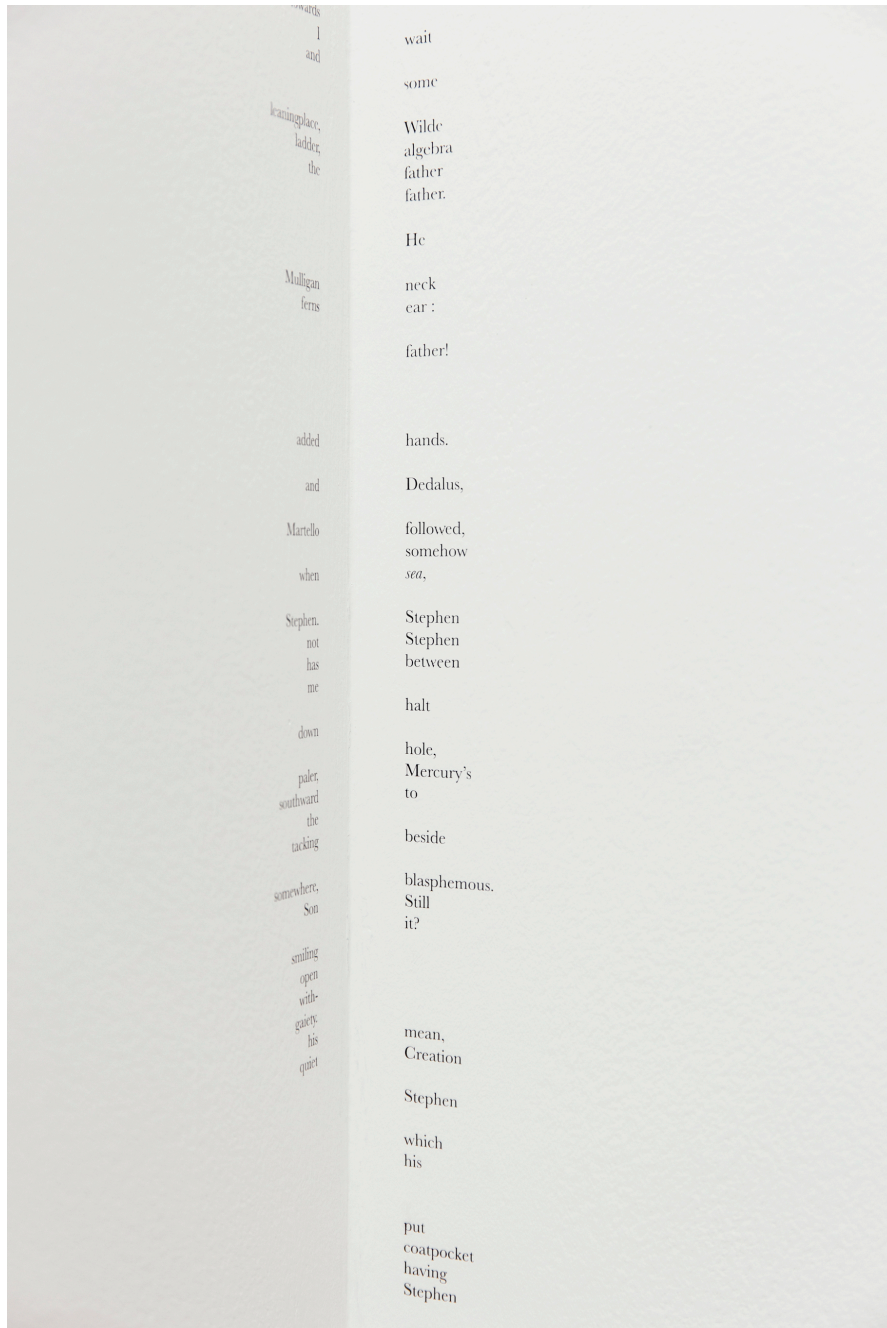
At the end of the exhibition I went over to Bury to pack up all the artworks and clear the space. I asked the technicians at the museum where the Tom Friedman piece was and they said the Stephen Friedman Gallery, London that represents Tom Friedman had rung them and instructed them to destroy the work with sledge-hammers at the end of the exhibition.

CASE STUDY TEN: In 2011, Patrick Wildgust, the curator of the Laurence

Sterne Trust in Coxwold, North Yorkshire, invited 169 artists, designers and

writers to respond to page 169 of Laurence Sterne's novel *The Life and*

Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman. On this page, Sterne presents a

marbled page, which he describes as the 'motley emblem of his work' in the

sense that he considers chance as the key to his particular craft. Wildgust

invited these 169 individuals to present what they felt was the 'emblem of their work'. The German artist Eugen Gomringer responded to the challenge by simply signing the small blank piece of white paper, in effect presenting nothing as his emblem.

CASE STUDY ELEVEN: The artist Jo Hamill presents a site-specific installation entitled *Gutter Words* (2016). *Gutter Words* is an installation in the corner of a gallery space that comprises extracts of *Ulysses* (1922) by James
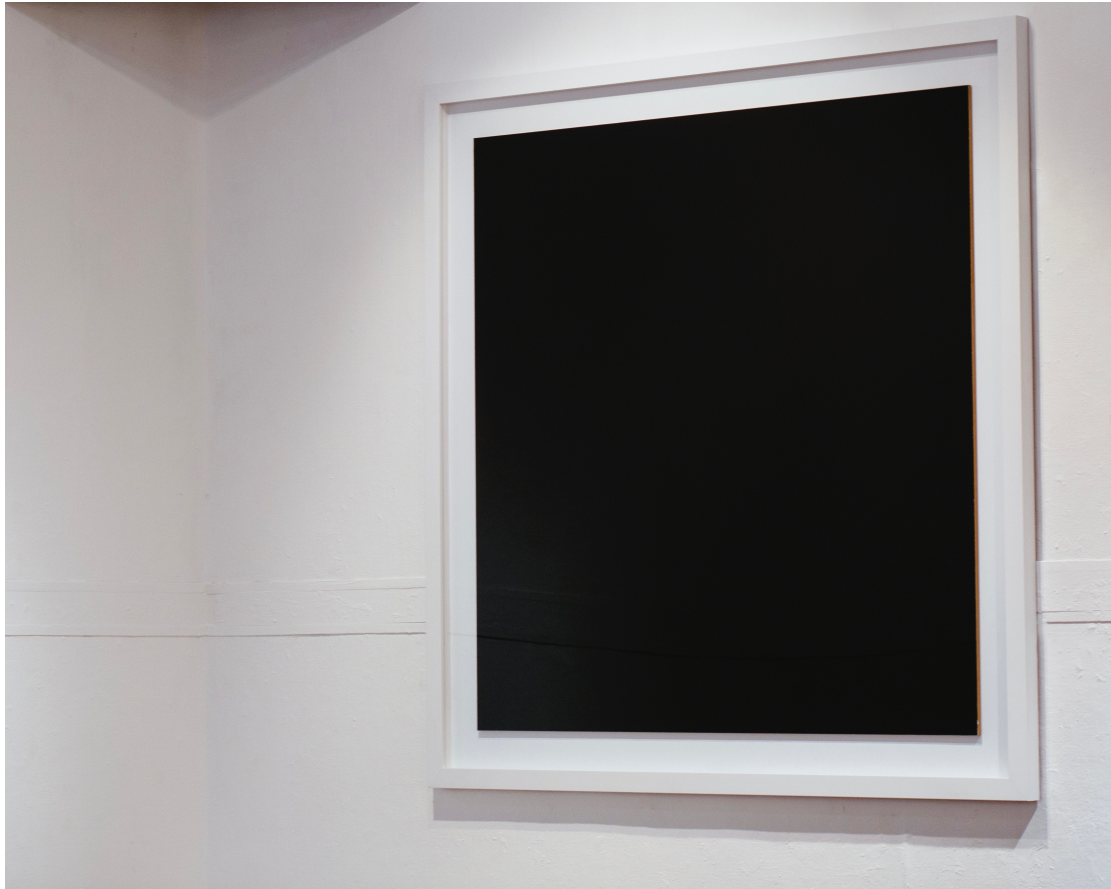
Joyce. In *Gutter Words* Hamill carefully selects words that appear on each side of the crease where the pages adjoin to create prose that resembles concrete poetry; as such, the corner of the space serves to mimic the crease.

CASE STUDY TWELVE: For *Reading as Art* (exhibition), I presented one of my own works from 2007. The work shares the title of the exhibition and includes hundreds of photographic stills of myself reading, photographed at a rate of around three to four frames per second. I frame approximately four minutes of reading for the viewer's engagement. The continuous unedited stream of photographs allows us to engage with the activity of reading itself. Shifting in my seat, eyes moving from left to right, blinking, hand playing with the page, book placed down flat on the table, breathing, finger stroking the page back and forth, the blur of movement as a page is turned. The 414 still

images of reading Jacques Derrida' book, *The Paper Machine* are presented on a digital screen, looping on a slide show.

CASE STUDY THIRTEEN: Finally, Nick Thurston presents *Erased Kosuth Concept (Art as Idea as Idea as Art)* (2008). Following on from Robert Rauschenberg's erasure of Willem de Kooning's drawing in 1953, Nick Thurston's *Erased Kosuth Concept* takes the first of Kosuth's dictionary definition series from the 1960s and erases it with light during the photographic print development exposure process taking place in the dark room. To make the print Thurston beamed just enough light through the enlarger – at such a distance so as to replicate the four square feet of Kosuth's work – that the refraction in the beam bent around the letters and blacked them out, thus burning the letters onto the paper and then off the paper into an over-exposed black square. As Thurston was making the

photographic silver print, he could see the words appear and disappear during the chemical processing of the image.

All of the work in the exhibition considered reading as a purposeful and powerful creative act in its own right. The artist as reader, recording the work of reading and asking us to read it anew. The artist as reader, inviting us to wonder what we are actually doing when we read, to attend to its material conditions – paper, print, the space of the page or the screen – and to rethink what counts as matter worth reading. The viewer as reader too, complicit in activating and reactivating this work, as she considers the relationship between reading and looking. Together, the two orientations of the exhibition conceive of reading as a practice, an intervention, an event, a question. What can reading (or not reading) make happen? To texts, to minds, to bodies, in the world? How to make the everyday, often private and undocumented action of reading – with its circumstances and protocols, its materials and affects, and its very real consequences – appear?

> These are questions that I ask,
>
> and I think there is some point
>
> in a*n* ~~writer~~ *artist* asking them. (Perec [1976] 1999: 185)

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Sommer, Carol (2016), *Cartography for Girls, An A–Z of Orientations*, York: information as material.

Notes

[1] Juan Ramón Jiménez is quoted by Ray Bradbury in the epigraph of his book *Fahrenheit 451* (2004).

[2] 'What this institution cannot bear, is for anyone to tamper with language. It can bear more readily the most apparently revolutionary ideological sorts of 'content', if only that content doesn't touch the borders of language and all of the juridico-political contracts that it guarantees'. Craig Dworkin quotes Jacques Derrida from 'Living on: Borderlines', in *Reading the Illegible* (2003: 157).

[3] I like the definition of 'play' offered by the Fluxus art movement:

[o]ne of the definitions of play is as 'a space in which something, as part of a mechanism is predetermined to take place within a specific space', or within a strictly defined set of movements. When there is too much play in the operation of any set of parts, there is a general disruption of the 'proper functioning' of that machine. The actions of Fluxus as they play are thus useful to think of in some analogous way to the actions of play in a machine, or specifically the improper operation of that machine when there is too much play. Thus Fluxus seeks not only to instigate play, but to do so in order to create too much play and thus cause the machine, in this case the system of meaning, and generally the art world, to become at least partially inoperable, or to operate incorrectly (in terms of individual and institutional expectations). (Smith 1993: 116)

[4] Obscenity begins for Jean Baudrillard 'when all becomes transparence and immediate visibility, when everything is exposed to the harsh and inexorable light of information and communication' in Craig Dworkin's, 'The logic of substrate', in *No Medium* (2013: 8).

[5] Excerpt from the press release for Robert Fitterman's *No, Wait: Yep: Definitely Still Hate Myself* (2014, http://www.uglyducklingpresse.org, accessed 5 August 2016).

[6] Craig Dworkin's, 'The Logic of Substrate' in *No Medium* (2013: 17–18).