

Concerning Human Understanding

Summer Residency Program Alumni Exhibition
Visual and Critical Studies Gallery
Wednesday, July 1 - Monday, July 27

Reception:

Thursday, July 9, 6:00 – 8:00p

Panel discussion:

Wednesday, July 15, 7:00 – 9:00pm

The SVA Summer Residency Program presents an exhibition of work by program alumni that investigates artistic production through language, and engages a discourse on communication, understanding and society. Participating artists include Sandra Erbacher (Germany), Marianna Olinger (Brazil) and Tim Roseborough (USA).

The artists employ various codes, and deconstruct those codes to comment on a wide range of issues including aesthetic production, institutional infrastructure and socio-economic constructs. This exhibition seeks to generate dialogue around art practice as both a building of a new language, and a subversion of existing language structures that, perhaps, belong to a dominant order. Together, these works provoke discourse on the ways that artistic language structures run parallel to, intersect and interact with spoken and written language.

Sandra Erbacher questions and disrupts the authoritative monolith of institutions through playful critique of objects and language. In *Ctrl-Alt-Delete*, a photograph of an ordinary office computer keyboard, the inscriptions on the individual keys have been erased, symbolically interrupting communication - the essential function of a keyboard. As a result, blankness becomes an active signifier, an interstitial condition, a space of projection and potentiality. *As If* is a commonplace hand dryer that, when activated, plays Opus No.1, Cisco System's default hold music, heard by millions of people who are put on hold around the world. While curiously upbeat and soothing, Opus 1 recalls the suspension, the feeling of being stuck in a loop without redemption. *TIIC (The Idiots in Charge)* is a neon representation of an acronym used in business jargon and corporate communications. The deliberately obscure TIIC reportedly has been inserted into electronic communication as a form of code to vent one's frustration that would go undetected by one's superior.

In her video *Wearing the Inside Out*, Marianna Olinger investigates madness as a language through the process of deconstructing her own documentary film about a defunct mental institution in Rio de Janeiro. The piece is an attempt to find the motifs and a first structure for the film through an exploration of available resources/ references that exclude the artist's original documentary footage: an experiment looking for the form of the film before the film exists. The dual-channel installation provides conflicting and complementary language systems that highlight the internal experience of madness as well as the ways that sanity — and insanity — are coded by society. An untitled etching on washi paper accompanies the video composition by providing a blank space onto which the language of madness may be inscribed.

Tim Roseborough challenges the viewing of artworks by using his own self-designed Englyph system to provoke a debate between written language and visual art. *Words are Stronger Than Art* is a declaration that, although visual art can achieve a world of communicative goals, language is sometimes best at exploring and elaborating complex topics and concepts. The title of the piece is less of an opinion than a deeply subjective — and evolving — observation. He is interested in exploring the dynamics between the wall and artwork by “reversing” the placement of the art in relation to the wall piece. The wall-sized mural features the phrase, “Everything But Art” in his Englyph writing system. In the middle of the mural hangs an “empty” canvas, to draw attention to and challenge the polarities of wall vs artwork, as well as subtly comment on the manner in which the context surrounding an object — including the language that describes it — shapes and defines its perception as art.

Curated by Keren Moscovitch, SVA faculty member and assistant director of Special Programs in the Division of Continuing Education. The exhibition is accompanied by a panel discussion with the artists and SVA faculty member and art writer Thyrza Nichols Goodeve on Wednesday, July 15, 7:00 – 9:00pm.

SVA’s Summer Residencies in New York City offer artists, designers and creative thinkers time, space and a supportive community in which to develop ideas and focus on their artistic direction. In addition to our time-honored studio residencies, a variety of innovative professional immersion programs provide opportunities for artists to explore new areas of social and technological practice and engage critically within their field. A unique combination of creative and professional resources provides a rich environment for growth and opportunity in the current art scene.