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Julien Bismuth
Stenograms¹
30.01.15 - 14.03.15



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 7², 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 21



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 8³, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 22



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 9⁴, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 23



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 10⁵, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 24



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 11⁶, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 25

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Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 12⁷, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 26



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 13⁸, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 27



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 14⁹, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 28



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 15¹⁰, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 29



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 16¹¹, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 30



Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 17¹², 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 31

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Julien Bismuth
Stenogram 18¹³, 2015
Serigraphy screen
56 x 46 cm
JB/M 32



Julien Bismuth
Collection of stenographic postcards 1¹⁴, 2015
Single channel video, 8 vintage postcards
JB/I 30



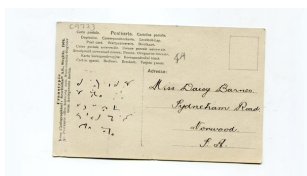
Julien Bismuth
Collection of stenographic postcards 2, 2015
Single channel video, 8 vintage postcards
JB/I 29



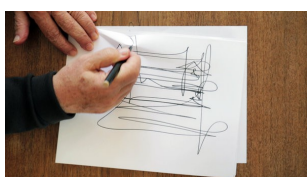
Julien Bismuth
Collection of stenographic postcards 3, 2015
Single channel video, 8 vintage postcards
JB/I 28



Julien Bismuth
Collection of stenographic postcards 4, 2015
Single channel video, 8 vintage postcards
JB/I 27



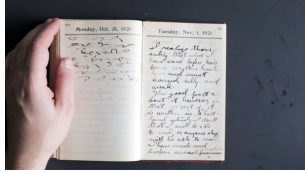
Julien Bismuth
Collection of stenographic postcards 5, 2015
Single channel video, 8 vintage postcards
On view
JB/I 26



Julien Bismuth
Pierre Bismuth¹⁵, 2015
Single channel video, anecdote
3 + 2 AP
JB/V 15

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Julien Bismuth
Diary of Charles H. Bell¹⁶, 2015
Diary, single-channel video
Unique, Video 1 +1 AP
JB/V 14



Julien Bismuth
Collection of stenographic miscellanea, 2015
Found objects (3 vintage Gabelsberger stamps, 1 Julius Nelson shorthand timer, 1 Speedwriting secretarial school promotional matchbook, 1 Avis rent-a-car promotional stenography pin, 2 Gregg shorthand competition pins, 1 Palmer Method promotional pin, 1 Collegio Nacional de Taquigrafos de Cuba pin)
JB/O 25



Julien Bismuth
Novel¹⁷, 2015
Found photograph (18 Xerox-Druck 23 cm), cropped digital file (variable dimensions)
JB/F 12

1 The series of 18 works titled *Stenogram* consists of texts written in 2014 by the artist that were then transcribed into stenographic shorthand by Carlos A. Rodriguez. The first six pieces in this series were shown at the Liste Art Fair with Galerie Emanuel Layr in 2014. The texts were originally composed in the reader's comments sections, feeds, chats, and posts of various webpages and online publications, always within conversations that were no longer active. These postings were then recomposed and rewritten to produce the following texts. In the event of their exhibition, the texts of each *Stenogram* have to be made visible and available to the viewers. For this exhibition, they have been added in as footnotes to each work in the exhibition list:

2 "This is the best new fashion ad. You have to repeat a form at least twice in order for it to register as a decision. Intentions, like tags or nicknames, can always be tacked on after the fact. The question is not whether it is or not, whether it is what it claims to be or not, but rather, how effective is it and how? Effects, like affects, fluctuate along the ungraded slopes of a continuum. For example, all of it qualifies, even the sound of an object being rung as in called for. When I called you last night, I had nothing to say, I just wanted to hear the sound of your own voice, I just wanted to know that you were willing to take my call. My saying it grants it a place within the composition that binds us. Everything sits in a medium that names and blinds, then mistakes. But nothing is wrong. Everything sits in a medium that holds but does not reveal.

A substance is what's left when there's nothing left to see. I can only sense in profiles. I can only sense profiles. I can only sense, get a sense of its profile, never its substrate, never its content, because none of it contains, none of it's content. None of it is content to fill the spaces between the profiles."

3 "Or, for example, if I take something and call it a form, what would it have functioned as otherwise? The question of form has been stretched not thin but thick and wide by the quantity of predicates that have slipped into its skin. When I say predicate I mean both the one and the other. When I say substrate, I picture something brittle and compressed. If I were to provide you with another example, would it shed any light on my targets? Allow me to provide a respite in the form of an image. Why would you even read it unless something drew you in and through its lines? She looked the part and played it, but the character was never named, never defined, it only came and went. This was perhaps the most beautiful part of the evening, the part where it all went away as word-of-mouth went from ear-to-ear. Seconds later, a gray boulder of a man rumbled after her, and they both disappeared backstage."

4 "I like to join the discussion when it has gone quiet. I like to add my word to a room filled only with the lingering scent of tobacco and. No alcohol is served at my parties; we like to turn in early before the late show. Sweet, sweat. I've only ever showered without my gear, this makes sense, but it has failed to register with my readers, viewers, followers. Do you like anything? she asked, holding her wallet open. Would you like to get anything, or would you like to go elsewhere? None of these pseudonyms suit me. I'd like to write my real name but in letters that fade like a background. White letters, for example. Here, for example, here they would be white."

5 "For once, someone has made good use of the internet. What can you do to help? Can you guess what the 29 secret students studying abroad in Europe aren't telling you? This is another one that I'm citing, it's from a song. Why do I feel gray to those who'll dance with me? I have stricken all the marks from between the letters. I have kept only those that lie low and allow for a continuation.

I'll say it in a different way. I would like what I make to have the attenuated resonance of its dissipation. A man steps out of his apartment, holding a plastic bag full of papers. He looks for a garbage can, but he can't find one, so he grips the bag a little lower just below the straps, crumpling the tops of the papers in the process.

Finally, he finds a dumpster and throws the bag into it. He cleans his hands by hitting them together with a sideways glancing clap. He starts back towards his home, but then stops, looks at his watch, and starts walking the other way. A car comes to a screeching halt nearby, but when the man turns to look, he can't see it, so he resumes his walk."

6 "I can only escape the frames and intervals of your appraisal by slowing down the alterations of this form, this motif, slowing them down to an almost imperceptible modulation, like the hum of an engine growing louder as its parts wear and tear. He cleaned the dirt off his hands with his hands. He. What I mean, what I meant, what I meant to say is that none of these things are given. None of them give past the moment of your interaction with them. What remains is a marker or an indication, so that you might make your way back to it and tangle with it anew. Every encounter brings to light a different perspective onto the same form. Light conditions in the room change, like the mood, your mood, or the mood of the room, which was gorged with expectation when I first arrived. Now things have subsided, windows have been opened, and some of us have fallen asleep on the couches and mattresses that have been set up for that very purpose. He cleaned the dirt off his hands with a series of glancing claps. Nothing stirred outside, for the wind had died and the cars were parked and idling. End for now, pause, with a shot of the grimy window, the curtain being pulled, the frame dropping to the dark floor, end/and credits rolling."

7 "How best to say this? Everyone claps sometimes, oftentimes. It's awkward not to clap when others are clapping. Clapping stings the hands, or rather, makes the hands sting. How is it that we haven't found a better way around this gap? What are the branches for if not for this? I like him and his hats, things are better now, maybe he can write? Maybe we could all write, but what would we write, and how would we write it? Would we type and print it or would we just scrawl it on a piece of cardboard with a felt-tip pen and then take it outside and hold it up for the length of a wait? Whoever it is that wants you will come. Things are better now is a standout track. And you have no recommends. He wins."

8 "His story left me cold; yet it came to define the sequence of events, even for me, even for the far more intimate witness that I had been. The flow of a narrative relies on the deliberate dimming and trimming - let me reverse that - trimming and dimming of certain significant details. Attenuations of cause and effect. A grasp deliberately kept tenuous so as to reduce the chances of overcompensation. An exposure held for a few seconds too long or too few. The problem is not the words you use but the need you create for using them, as if words could notch the belt of a timeline, as if there were clean breaks to be found in such continuous modulations of the general landscape. Yesterday I woke up and 'heard a cat in his office.' None of it adds up, it just stacks and shuffles. None of it adds. None of it adds up. None of it adds up to anything, any one thing."

9 "To be your own shame. Everything is available in targets. How does price shape the contours of the object priced? Nothing will ever have been in vain once you strike the 'dirt that pays.' Sometimes the only difference between deliberate incongruity and regrettable awkwardness is a set of eyelashes like punctuation. Though it may come off as disingenuous, might you not also be flattered or at the very least reassured by my attempt at an explanation? Its fabric dyed. Naming the steps taken to reach it can make the destination seem more approachable. Coincidences are only magical when they are brought up again in conversation. 'Nothing happens for a reason: things happen and reasons occur.' I would like you to think that I read this somewhere, because I cannot imagine myself having written this phrase, much less deciding to keep it. I too like nothing more than these precipitations of form and content. I have preserved the age-old dichotomies only to let you know that I still care. Does this even qualify as a story? I am a fool with my knee on my mind. We chased them into the waterfall, but can I stop here and finish another time?"

10 "Everybody loves an explanation. Thirst is only ever renewed, he said, she smiled, he walked and talked and put his arm around her and, would you like to go to somewhere and have a drink? It's on this house. Because she's hot means because you too can feel the heat. Would you like to express if not relieve yourself of this accumulation of tendencies? None of it is as interesting as the contours of our combined activity. Not mine but yours and theirs. Would you want it any other way? Would you really want it any other way, or is there something about the compliant security of your enclosure that soothes you even in the midst of such precipitations?"

11 " 'Drawing bright lines over gray areas' is a nice line. The unwieldiness of the object carried is a nice touch. But bright lines as opposed to what? Dark or even weathered lines? A specific event should not be stretched to cover a general ground. It should be forcefully sheltered from dilution or dilation. Highlighting a text as you read it stains not just the paper but the print it carries. I prefer bookmarks to cornered pages. I'd rather believe that such violence as you describe is the exception rather than the norm, even if statistics were to belie my optimism. I would not judge them as a species to be feared when fear clearly haunts both sides of the divide. It is neither a question of empathy or acceptance, but rather of examining even the most seemingly inexpressive sides of the equation. How can we come to an understanding of such excesses as these given our increasing tolerance for excess? When I say 'excess,' I am referring to the comments posted below rather than the story printed above. A discursive slip of a cursive tongue. If it works, then by all means break it, especially if it is working too well, if it is working beyond your expectations. When I say 'it,' I mean neither the incident decried, nor its contestation, but the device you have been carrying with you around all this time, under yet another heading, one which has yet to be addressed."

12 "Now everything that happens can be taken as a reason to keep on moving on. I am rethinking mush to make the perfect muesli. Our impetus is preserved by keeping it free of intention or examination. Like you, I too can respond on cue. These are probably the coolest houses in the world and now they can finally be explained. The largest constructions have been designed to implode. I don't get layers. I won't like irony, and digs make me 'furious.' Enter your comment: This is my version of a weather report. Add your comment: Let's hit it ~~with~~ in a folky frock. I am a family man and a sniper, he said. I need a liberal beach. I'll give you a throwback snap, a trademark grin, and a complicated split down the middle of an accent that I can no longer imitate. Flashback to childhood: remember when curiosity shaped our brains? Remember when we imitated blindly in order to learn not just the ropes but from the awareness they provide? By posting your comment you agree to the rules of our house and home. Find out now. Come closer so I can stroke the wall of your enclosure. My sweat contaminates only those who care to ingest it."

13 "This is really embarrassing, I've never talked or written about this before, but I figured this was a good place to ask. I have a fantasy in which I have sex with a group of strangers, but in absolute silence, like a movie with the sound turned off. The room looks like an archive or a library, and the air inside of it feels stale. I never imagine a beginning, I just imagine either walking in on it or already being a part of it. It always ends abruptly and silently. This is not a dream, it's a waking fantasy. I have it all the time, and it disturbs me."

14 The video shows a collection of 45 postcards purchased on ebay by searching for "stenography/ collectible/ postcards." The original collection has been fragmented into 5 groups of eight postcards from the original collection of 45 postcards, with an additional group of six cards kept by the artist. Each group is accompanied by a copy of the video. The video can be shown alongside its accompanying selection of postcards or on its own.

15 Filmed with the participation of Pierre Ernest Nessim Bismuth, the artist's father. Accompanied by an anecdote to be communicated orally.

16 Diary of Charles "Chas" H. Bell of Waco, Texas for the year 1921, purchased on ebay from the seller "bob4676" who recovered it from "a house that was being cleaned out in Brenham, Texas" amongst "a box of unrelated papers... decades ago." The bulk of the diary is written in a modified version of Gregg shorthand.

17 "Novel" is a cropped digital image made from a vintage photographic print purchased on ebay. Its title was also "cropped" from the text on the back of the photograph. The cropped digital image can be printed in any size or quantity and on any surface, as long as the prints are neither sold nor exchanged. For this exhibition, it was inserted into the announcement for the show. The original print can also be shown. The text on the back of the original photographic print reads: *Novel: Novel out of doors visual education classes are conducted at Pasadena, California by the Educational Research Association. Demonstrations involve a new simplified shorthand which some educators believe may become a universal writing method. Several years were spent developing the simplified writing which is based upon the corresponding longhand letters but utilizes only sufficient of the characters to serve as a memory aide, so that it is learned almost at sight. Photo shows enlarged characters being flashed before a visual education class of junior high school age at Pasadena. Characters shown spell Educational Research Association of Pasadena.*