Julien Bismuth
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Every work in this exhibition rests on language.

For the past several years, I have been using windows in inactive public forums as notepaper, as surfaces on which to compose and refine texts. The texts I produced were written in conversations that were inactive, rooms that had gone silent. The usernames I took to write are often references to other writers, other texts. For example, the name ‚MynonaÝ was the pseudonym of the early 20th century German writer Salomo Friedlaender. It is also the word ëAnonymÝ (anonymous) spelled backwards. For this exhibition, screen shots were made of the entire webpage in which each text was composed and posted. The prints replicate the width of my computer, while the length is often just a fraction of the actual length of the webpage. The materialization of an image is most effective when it is stamped with the contingencies of its origin.

Another series of works consists of short phrases that occasionally refer to something other than themselves. *A work that spreads rumors about itself* is a work that I produced several years ago, which consists of a rumor, a rumor that made its way back to me last year. *A work that lies about itself* consists of a lie, which, like the rumor, is being spread by others for me, starting this year. In order to preserve the efficacy of these works, neither the rumor nor the lie are revealed, their existence is simply attested to. The work titled *everything has a face and every face has its thing* is linked to a material object best described as a trace: four of my fingerprints, marked with ink, positioned to replicate the respective positions of my eyes, nose, and mouth, then pressed against the glass of a windowpane. The two other text works on view are phrases that, like any other fragment of language, can be read and interpreted as the reader chooses.

The last work in the exhibition is an image, a banal photograph, taken from the window of an airplane, which I encrypted with the phrase: *nothing pleases me more than the surface of things to come.* The phrase was encoded into the data of the image, using a digital steganography program specifically written for this series of works. Digital steganography is commonly used to dissimulate a text inside an image, but without visibly altering the image itself. This software allows me to make this hidden presence more or less visible, by defining how much of the data is altered by the encryption. To produce this image, I overwrote every bit of data in the original image file, so that it completely disappears under the mosaic patterns of its disruption.

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