

Ian Carr-Harris

Onomatopoeias

9 December 2021 to 5 February 2022

Twelve words written in cursive and traced onto twelve blackboard-style panels.

Blurt, Chatter, Cough, Croak, Giggle, Gurgle, Humph, Moan, Mumble, Murmur, Screech, Wheeze

Drawn below each word, an inscription of its International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) instructions communicate how that word is spoken, how it sounds.

An abstract mark on a page, or a blackboard, is very different from a sound produced by the body itself. These recent works are reminders that language is intimately tied to the world of our physical experience, and that when we write or speak we are rehearsing what it feels like to move through a room or encounter one another.

Onomatopoeias is a continuation and further exploration of Ian Carr-Harris's interest in words and language; language as material, and the act of writing – making language speak – addresses our imaging of knowledge, our caress of its look, its trace of itself. To trace is to draw, and Carr-Harris's new works draw out, extend and disperse the intangible relations between word and image. Just as we are drawn into and absorbed by their material presence, they draw our attention.

In intentionally selecting words that refer to gestures and exclamations associated with the body's pre-articulated language, Carr-Harris emphasizes the affective relationship we have with our own physical properties. *Onomatopoeias* builds on the traditional and now iconic schoolroom blackboard as the site of negotiation with the act of writing and our ability to communicate beyond the confines of our immediate presence.

A 13th work, *Wrinkle*, is included in the exhibition. A wrinkle (which in the body can be the effect of water on skin, or the wrinkling of the nose sensing a smell) represents a reactive effect of the body's location in space. A wrinkle is also associated with a disturbance of logic and the conventional flow of deduction, an intervention into the normal scheme of things, an otherness to its inception.

Wrinkle is a doubled set of panels installed to fold across one corner of the space, with that on the right a physical panel like the other 12, and the one on the left a photographic copy of that panel inverted to reveal the writing in reverse – an echo or unfolding of the original on the right, but also no longer material – an image behind a screen, an echo of an original. And like an echo, *Wrinkle*'s inverted twin extends that original, reversing the flow of the text to emphasize its formal character, while simultaneously suggesting the sound of a text resonating beyond its source. An image, and a sound, separated from itself.