

LAUREL GITLEN

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Katz Tepper
Roasted Cockroach for Scale

January 6 – February 18, 2023

Screenings on the hour begin January 6, 12 PM, with a reception from 6–8pm

Laurel Gitlen is pleased to present *Roasted Cockroach for Scale*, Katz Tepper's first exhibition with the gallery, on view from January 6 through February 11, 2023.

Harnessing the abundance of telecommunication platforms as generative albeit sinister tools, *Roasted Cockroach for Scale* (2020–2022) is a startlingly tender, playful, and critical collaboration between the artist and their farmer father. This improbable narrative video consists entirely of text-based screen-recordings from now ubiquitous communication interfaces, including Google Docs, Zoom, AI speech-to-text programs, Gmail, and iMessage. Fragmented, persistent streams of type, punctuation, side-bar rulers, captions, and redactions overlap, synthesizing into palimpsestic concrete poetry in motion. Tepper's father Haim, who self-identifies in the video as “both a participant and a narrator, and a father of an artist” activates the audio with his thick hybrid accent reading scripted text and responding to prompts, while Tepper performs a third character known as “the artist” and “the sick artist,” mostly present behind the keyboard.

Presented in the gallery as a single channel video in a screening room and simultaneously available online, *Roasted Cockroach for Scale* problematizes the privileged status of the direct encounter. Mining distance and its accompanying technologies for material, Tepper's relational experiment with their father embraces the emancipatory, contradictory possibilities of remote access, braiding disability, migration, and surveillance with disarming intimacy and humor. As though it were a theater script, an early scene in the video features the disembodied (or distance-embodied) magnified sound of fingers tapping a keyboard as the text “the setting of this artwork is the space between two computers that are hundreds but not thousands of miles apart” forms awkwardly on screen. A multi-layered screen choreography thus unfolds in this thicket of in-betweenness, with much of the text generated through the inherently multiplicitous processes of translation, transliteration, and transcription.

The crux of this intergenerational exchange concerns porosity and transmission at the cellular level, and the insistence on text as image proposes alternative modes of representation that resist spectacle. A recurring giant black circle – a crudely magnified punctuation mark in a Google Doc – is the closest approximation to an image of the “colonoscopy footage” the film repeatedly refers to. These distancing maneuvers obfuscate narrative details like nationality or diagnoses, favoring text at the periphery, like AI generated keywords from recorded conversations, or barely legible scribbles in a symptoms journal, to piece together a portrait of a relationship.

Roasted Cockroach for Scale screens on the hour and runs for 47 minutes. The video features captions, and a visual description is available by request. The viewing room features multiple seating options. The gallery is wheelchair accessible and has a gender neutral accessible restroom; please contact the gallery for ramp access. Masks are encouraged.

Katz Tepper (b 1987 FL, lives and works in GA) has had recent solo exhibitions with Cushion Works, San Francisco, White Columns, New York, and Atlanta Contemporary, Georgia. Their work has been included in group exhibitions at Fluentum, Berlin, Red Bull Arts Detroit, and the Jewish Museum of Maryland. Tepper earned an MFA from the Milton Avery School of Art at Bard College, and a BFA from Cooper Union. They have attended residencies at Macdowell and Skowhegan School of Art, are a current fellow with the New Jewish Culture Fellowship, and are a recipient of the Wynn Newhouse Award, along with a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

Please contact the gallery for further information or images, office@laurelgitlen.com.

Remote viewing QR Code



*The entrance to the gallery is on East Broadway at the rear door of the Apple Bank Building. Gallery hours are Wednesday – Saturday, 12–6, and other times by appointment.