

The Ghost in the Logos: Fragmentation and Inscriptions in *e / Crit - s*

The act of writing has long been considered a cultural device, a way to transform thought into permanent and exchangeable markings. However, in this contemporary moment of technological and political reaction, language is now inverted, encrypted, and reprocessed through digital culture. The original source of "inscription" and the pursuit of truth has undergone a radical subversion within the transactional nature of hyper-capitalism. The exhibition *e / Crit - s*, curated by Tom Leeson, serves as a critical examination of this shift. It suggests that today, meaning is not found in a singular context of clarity, but rather within a network of interpretations marked by erasure, complexity, and a pervasive sense of uncertainty. This is an exhibition that asks the question, what does it mean to "inscribe" in a time of accelerated impermanence?

A conceptual basis for the exhibit lies in the idea of "corrupted calligraphies" that goes beyond the surface of the perceivable and the discernible. Rather than viewing corruption as a one dimensional failure of communication, the artists in this exhibition approach the concept within a multi-level complexity that extends the acquisition of knowledge in a time of exaggerated metaphors like "machine learning" and "large language models." This tendency of blending abstraction with critique is similar to the structural methods and tendencies of Kara Walker's work, "Unmanned Drone" [1] and the paintings of Glenn Ligon [2] and Adam Pendleton. [3] In similar methods of deconstructing the formal integrity of material and language, the artists in the exhibit reveal the sociopolitical forces that alters the "logos" through creative dissonance.

e / Crit - s echoes the intersection of the symbolic and the real, where the logos is no longer considered the sole source of meaning but a necessary entanglement with its ghosts and shadows. What does it mean to "in/scribe," "de/scribe," or "re/write" when the material composition of language is constantly dissolving within a time-less present?

The strategies employed by the participating artists—Hu Di, David Jang, Michele Lorusso, Mieke Marple, (A)Provisional-Collective, Xi Qin, and Yixuan Tan draw a direct line back to the radical experiments of early 20th-century modernism. We see the influence of Cubism and the "papiers collés" of Braque, Duchamp's "indifference" toward traditional aesthetic beauty, Paik's "Robot K456" and Schwitters' use of sonic constructions.

In the digital age, these historic avant-garde techniques are updated through a currency of "semiotic technology." [4] Here, language is processed through fragmentation and disassembly; it becomes a paradoxical practice of writing that is not necessarily meant to be read in the traditional sense, but to be "seen and heard" as signs pointing to the over commodification and subversion of meaning within authoritarian assertions. *e / Crit - s* is a collective search for new meanings in the discarded and the disrupted.

At the heart of *e / Crit - s* is the concept of translation, not just of language, but of mediums and states of being. As Ornette Coleman once suggested, the artist must "translate one thing into another," [5] moving between the sonic, the visual, and the digital. Quoting Jack Whitten, "to make is an event that takes place in spacetime." [6] *e / Crit - s* functions as a translation of layered meanings through a semiotic alchemy, gleaned from a temporal and fluid spacetime.

This fluidity is a response to the structural complexity of our particular spacetime. By embracing "accelerated impermanence," the exhibit advocates for a new culture of literacy, one that combines embodied experience with a material critique of the very tools we use to communicate. In doing so, they lead us toward new ways of seeing that accepts the shattered nature of contemporary discourse as a starting point for rediscovering truth rather than an obstacle to it.

Ultimately, *e / Crit - s* does not seek to repair the broken word. Instead, it invites us to inhabit the parallel worlds created by its fragmentation, finding a profound beauty in the haunting of our digital and material inscriptions.

David Jang's "Reciprocal Latent Space" is a generative drawing and writing system that translates the urban and natural environs of Los Angeles into a slow, evolving cartography. Using datasets derived from satellites, the work plots and draws the paths of infrastructure, density, and terrain onto the gallery's large wall surface. The work builds layers of ink through a process of automated scripting that accumulates over time like sediment.

As the work unfolds, moisture is applied that deliberately disrupts the marks, softening edges and introducing moments of erosion. These interruptions and actions destabilize the precision of the data, allowing the drawing to drift between intention and impermanence. What emerges is a negotiation between machine logic, environmental processes and material behavior.

"Reciprocal Latent Space" becomes a study of urban evolution, machine agency, and the entangled systems of language that shapes both the human and natural environments.

Exploring the cyclical relationship between creation and decay, Jang's work examines how technology is derived from organic life and how identity is negotiated within hybrid systems of control, automation, and desire. The project investigates what it means to be human where the boundaries between the actual and the artificial blur into a continuous system of transformation.

Mieke Marple's "Dn't Ask Why" reveals a hidden poem when the viewer scans a QR code on the back of the work and then holds their smartphone up to painting's frontal image of a tiger. The poem that is revealed through A.R. acts as an existential rhyme inspired by the phrase from Dr. Seuss's "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" ("The Grinch hated Christmas - the whole Christmas season. Now, please don't ask why; no one quite knows the reason."). The poem alternates between encouraging the reader to ask "Why" and to "Dn't Ask Why," and ends with a series of censored words, flipping between analysis, surrender, and censorship. Whether the censorship is self-censorship or due to external forces is purposefully vague. The appropriated phrase bears little resemblance to its original meaning, while maintaining Dr. Seuss's playfulness with language. The work is part of Marple's ongoing interest in the relationship between language, visual association, technology, and phenomenological experience. The augmented reality VFX and sound is by Francisco García Nava.

Michele Lorusso explores the discursive potential of certain materials and objects, addressing their symbolic and poetic dimensions. Materials and objects become tools that allows speculation and visualized narratives related to identity, duality and the future of memory. The work, "A Perforation in the Current Events" is a three-flag installation that explores the manipulation of language and information through printed media, newsprint and the deconstruction of the Western

alphabet. The layered letters on the newspaper flags are pierced by its own flagpole. A violation, but also an index, an aspirational pointer to another interpretation of truth and power.

Qi Qin's "RenMinZhiSheng (The People's Voice)" is also presented as a newspaper with slightly yellowed edges. Photographs are printed across its surface and interwoven with lines of Chinese characters that appear legible, yet resistant to interpretation and readability.

The newspaper preserves the visual structure of information, including columns, captions, and fragments of reportage, while withholding the certainty those structures typically promise. Though fabricated, it gestures toward real conditions and histories. Its language is blurred, mistranslated or displaced, suggesting that systems of publication do not simply record reality but organize, authorize, and control it. Within this format, a narrative can appear coherent and authoritative even as other realities, equally present yet unrecognized, remain excluded from the public record.

Appearing as a document that asks to be read, the work ultimately withholds entry. It performs as a record while suspending meaning, directing our attention instead to a misplaced and invisible authority.

Hu Di's work "char" consists of four sheets of Xuan paper, arranged from left to right, forming a visual sequence that evolves from binary-like blocks into brush forms resembling calligraphic characters. Inspired by the structure of Buddhism's Heart Sutra, the final image appears text-like but remains unreadable. The title "char" references the programming term for a single character, the smallest unit of textual information, reflecting the work's exploration of how "enlightened" language and didactic meaning emerge from simple marks or glyphs.

"Corruption Series (Pure, Beauty, Wrong, Bilderflut)" is an ongoing archival project of 30x60" giclée prints by (A)Provisional-Collective. The black and white work hangs on the wall like scrolls. It plays with the structures of found language by exploiting the glitch through the repetition and erasure of ASCII text. This strategy is intended to "unearth" new knowledge through a handmade process that is intended as a playful subversion of the algorithmic image.

The process of making embraces an experience in the time of machine learning through its use of "non/sense" and noise. These four objects can be considered semiotic, semantic, and somatic inversions, placing the viewer within a space for contemplation, amidst the turbulent yet lyrical nature of pattern and abstraction.

Yixuan Tan's "The Finger Pointing at the Moon" navigates a virtual world of language, while considering the premise that we are also imprisoned by it. Tan states that our entire logic is built upon a linguistic virtual reality. He sources the Buddhist quote: "The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao" to identify the limitations of conventional meaning. Every surface from the VR temple architecture to the VR Buddha's limbs are tattooed with the sound of "Tuk Tuk," a relentless onomatopoeia meant to mimic the sound of footsteps. In this virtual space, Tan has stripped away all material textures, leaving only a landscape of raw signifiers.

Within the VR space, the sun rises and sets in a frantic, exhausting loop, casting violent shadows across the linguistic monuments. As you look up at the titans of text, you face a choice; Do you continue to "read" the world through its labels, or do you leap out of the virtual reality of language to feel the visceral, absurd tremor of the thing itself?

In the end, *e / Crit - s* doesn't seek to repair the broken word. Instead, it invites us to inhabit the parallel worlds created by its fragmentations, finding a profound beauty in the ghosts that haunt our current digital and material inscriptions.

At times, art and its critique eludes or opposes our desire for reason. It affords us a temporal respite, a spatial freedom to delve into a poetic zone of memory, a non-representational and indirect wandering and conjuring. All of the work in the exhibit functions within this autonomous zone, leaving us in various states of wonder and in awe.

NOTES

[1] <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2026-02-24/moca-stonewall-jackson-statue-kara-walker-monuments>

[2] <https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/glenn-ligon-hong-kong-2024/>

[3] <https://adampendleton.net/>

[4] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiotics>

[5] <https://tysm.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Derrida-Coleman-The-Others-Language.-J.-Derrida-Interview-Ornette-Coleman-23-June-1997-1.pdf>

[6] Jack Whitten, Notes from the Woodshed, Hauser & Wurth Publishers, p.435