

MURRAY GUY

453 WEST 17 STREET

NEW YORK NY 10011

TEL 212 463 7372

FAX 212 463 7319

FIONA BANNER

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Murray Guy is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of new work by Fiona Banner.

Fiona Banner has made a variety of work, from drawings of chinook helicopters to a boxed firework display, but she has become known largely for her hand-written and printed texts, 'wordscapes' or 'still films'. Banner narrates in her own words entire feature films or specific action sequences, the format always corresponding to the content. *The desert*, which relates *Lawrence of Arabia*, the first movie in cinemascope, is eighteen feet long. The length makes the text practically unreadable and it emerges more as an image, the words shimmering across the surface like heat rising from the desert. It reveals itself as one tenseless instant, an all-inclusive frame that can be visually excerpted whilst remaining simultaneously complete. Describing the movies as though she were running alongside the action, her commentary is personal yet it retains the film's own voice. *THE NAM*, a book of a thousand unnumbered pages, describes six well-known Vietnam movies in one continuous paragraph, without any indication of titles or of where each begins and ends. The trancelike continuity captures the monotony of war, whilst expressing how history is moderated or mythologized via popular culture. She is intrigued by "how things purport to be objective or how one chooses to interpret fictive things as fact".

This is it, a recollection of one of these narratives, shows the selective aspect of memory, the automatic process of reading information, but not necessarily absorbing or digesting it. Attempting to recall one of the movies from *THE NAM*, Banner realized how little of it came back to her. The perspective projects the words and the letters fade at the far edge, indicating how memory becomes fainter with time. Each letter is carefully shaded rather than written, suggesting a deliberation, as one would search for the right words and the haziness of retelling.

The opposite of words is their lack, the space between them, the pauses, the punctuation. In a new series of large pencil drawings of "full stops" (periods), Banner investigates the structure of language and the assumed immateriality of punctuation. Whereas the various fonts of letters are discernable, the period seems uniform. Yet it is a symbol for something particular, non-negotiable and final, neither translatable nor open to interpretation. Perceived subliminally, it is not 'read' in the linguistic sense. By enlarging the period to 1,800 point, Banner reveals not only its character, but also gives it the potential to be interpreted. "I began thinking about the idea of a punctuation mark as a form of mark-making in itself and also I was thinking about the shapes as being both positive and negative at the same time. In many respects they are drawings without a subject - that you can project both onto and into."

The logical conclusion to scribbling out text is an overall obliteration to create new meaning through a form of palimpsest. *Face* is both an act of destruction and construction. An intensely worked surface of pencil, it is the ultimate drawing, "the entire shape is the mark." The many lines of which it is comprised are consumed by the sheer scale to become a physical entity. The silvery surface is elusive and untouchable, yet receptive, like a huge piece of carbon paper awaiting the viewers imprint.

These drawings relate to Banner's continuing fascination with the framing or definition of a subject. They also draw attention to the intelligent and playful investigation of various forms of mark-making, which underscores all of her work.

Fiona Banner lives and works in London. She has shown extensively in Europe, including the Tate Gallery, London and will exhibit at the Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen, in May. Please call Janice Guy or Margaret Murray 212 463 7372 for further details. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-6pm.