

Endnotes

¹ Walter Benjamin, from *Das Passagenwerk*, translation by Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, MIT Press, 1991, 73.

² Angela Silver, "Archaeologies of Inscription," *Objects in Context: Theorizing Material Culture*. Stephanie Anderson and Cierra Webster, Proceedings from the graduate student conference (Re)Activating Objects: Social Theory and Material Culture, University of Western Ontario 2013, 151-155.

³ For commentary, see Gregory Elgstrand, *Romalux: Notations from the Prix de Rome work 2003-2004*, Stride Gallery, Calgary, 2004.

⁴ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemannrans. trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Belknap Press, 2002.

⁵ Walter Benjamin, "The Image of Proust," *Illuminations*, Fontana, 1992, 198.

⁶ Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Crepuscular Dawn*, MIT Press, 2002, 150.

Artist Bio

Angela Silver is a PhD Candidate in Cultural Studies at Queens University. Her visual arts practice examines notions of absence through the residue of language. Using artifacts from writing systems she seeks to restructure and reorder language systems. Drawing on performance, she re-tools obsolete writing objects as a strategy to reconsider speech, writing and communication itself. She has exhibited at DAC in Brooklyn, DARE-DARE in Montreal, as well as in Beverly, MA, Quebec, Toronto, Rome, Calgary, Pittsburgh, and the Netherlands. Silver's practice and research have been generously supported by, a J.W. McConnell Fellowship and a Social Sciences Humanities Research Council Fellowship. She currently teaches with Andrew King at the McGill School of Architecture.

Author Bio

Shauna McCabe is a curator, writer and arts administrator. Executive Director of the Textile Museum of Canada since 2010, she previously held the position of Canada Research Chair in Critical Theory in the Interpretation of Culture at Mount Allison University where she founded CHARTS, the Centre for Humanities and Arts Research in Transdisciplinary Space. From 2005-2007, McCabe was the Director of The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Senior Curator of the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island from 1998-2005. With a doctorate from the University of British Columbia, she has produced over 50 exhibitions of art and design including *Marimekko, With Love* (Textile Museum of Canada, 2013), *Nuit Blanche* (Toronto, 2012), *Formerly Exit Five: Portable Monuments to Recent History* (Kenderdine Art Gallery, 2010), *Krimiseries: Raqs Media Collective, Deimantas Narkevicius, Stih & Schnock, Mac Adams, and Susan Schuppli* (Museum London, 2010) and *Dig Up My Heart: Artistic Practice in the Field* (Confederation Centre Art Gallery, 2010).

Open Studio acknowledges the generous support of its government funders, members, individual donors and volunteers. For a full list of supporters, visit openstudio.on.ca

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Open Studio receives matching funds through artsVest Toronto, run by Business for the Arts with the support of Canadian Heritage and the Toronto Arts Council.



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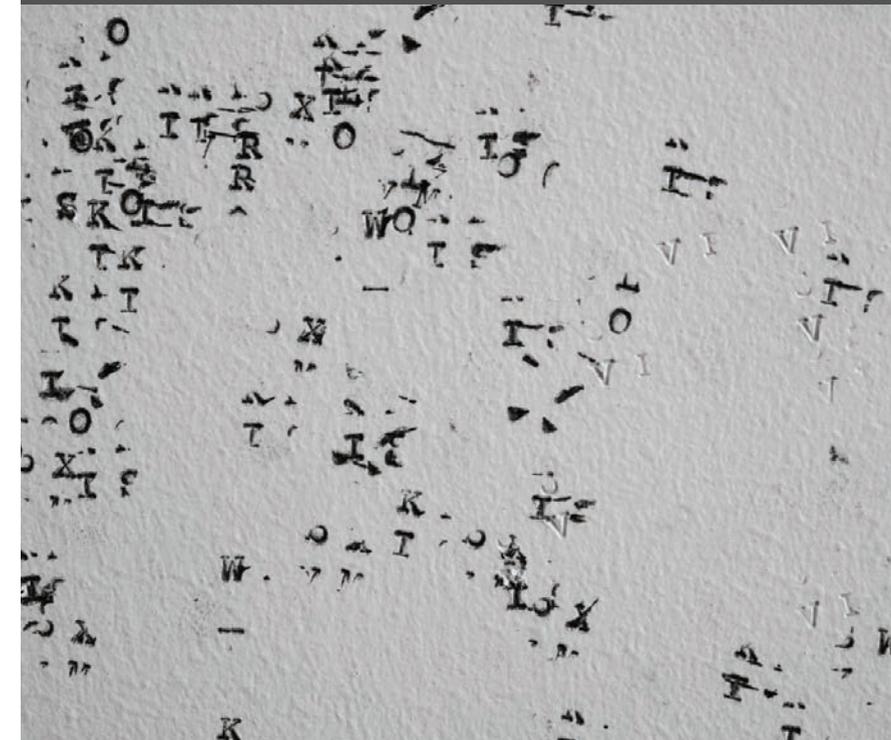
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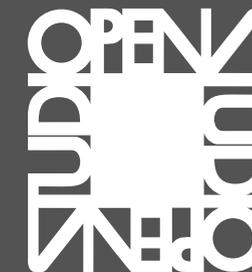


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FEBRUARY 12 - MARCH 12, 2016

Opening Reception: Friday, February 12, 6:30-8:30 pm

Performance by Angela Silver during opening reception.



OPEN STUDIO

**Contemporary
Printmaking Centre**

Echolalias

By Shauna McCabe

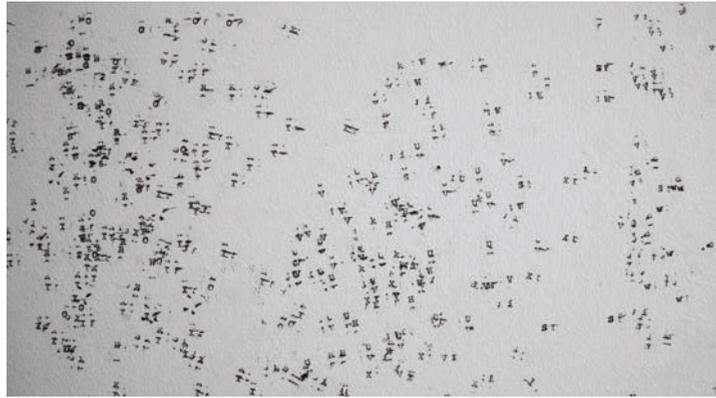
I have nothing to say, only to show.

—Walter Benjamin¹

Echolalias evokes a matrix of ideas that Angela Silver has explored over the last fifteen years—artistic expression as both process and trace, performance and inscription, remembering and forgetting, and the permeable thresholds between these realms. Emerging from her ongoing investigation of technologies of communication, here the artist transforms the gallery over time using a hand-held typewriter ball, the slow methodical effort of mark-making recorded directly on walls with each hand strike on carbon paper, creating an evolving alphabetic palimpsest with its simultaneous accretion and erosion of letters in overlapping layers. While "echolalia" itself refers to the repetition of spoken words, the accumulation of simple marks coalesces into an expansive lacework of symbols and signs imbued with a sense of stillness that underscores the poetics, as opposed to pragmatics, of communication.

Silver's interest in how time moves and the fugitive, fragmentary nature of communication verges on the archaeological, a recurring source within her creative inquiries. At one level, her attention to and interest in the trace is obvious, engaging the interplay of micro and macro to transform architectural space into recording surface with a vocabulary of subtle marks developed over many years of working to distill the most fundamental elements of language. In the slippage between writing and drawing, text and image, the symbolic and ritual dimensions of communication blur, highlighting text in its social function with both private and public dimensions. Uniting the artist and audience in the act of excavating and unearthing meaning from the residue of impressions, efforts to "read" the walls as formal language fail, underscoring the limits of legibility and perceptibility as well as the itinerant nature of our ciphers for understanding.

The overriding sense of the disconnection between gesture and trace that results belies Silver's deeper interest in the



remoteness of the past as well as the materiality of cultural memory. *Echolalias* is part of the artist's ongoing investigations related to "archaeologies of inscription"; throughout her art practice is a consistent concentration on our culture of accelerated obsolescence and oblivion, particularly in relation to the ubiquity of technologies of communication and their effects. Engaging "the materiality of information, from the statecraft's bureaucratic collection and classification to intangible clouds of data storage," remarks Silver, "my practice shreds, sews and performs our tools revealing the physical, emotional, and psychological attachment we invest in these devices."²

Revisiting historical elements of material culture that speak to the tension of artifact and text, she often applies obsolete writing instruments and tools for inscription to deconstruct and recompose language, with the purpose to reconsider the social function of speech, writing and communication itself. This interest in the archaeological fragment extends from her ongoing collaborative practice with architect Andrew King. Their work with the built environment has been infused with an approach to social space conceived of as an intentional and accidental accumulation of "marks," informed in particular by writer and philosopher Walter Benjamin's approach to urban experience in *Das Passagenwerk*, *The Arcades Project*, manifest as a deconstructed and layered montage of fragmentary text.³ *Romalux*, for example, produced by King and Silver as recipients of the Prix de Rome award in 2003-2004, consisted of a montage of over 1200 momentary digital fragments—

impressions of the city captured in movement—abstracted documentation of over 100 itineraries into, through, and out of ancient and contemporary Rome.⁴

While immersed in language, Silver's installation comprises a significant dimension of hand-work, and her experience as a fibre artist is deeply influential. Expressed in particular in the texture of *Echolalias*, the evolving structure of interwoven and intertwined language strands, her engagement with communication is as much a tactile as textual process. Processing and reconstituting experience, the residual surface of the expanding pattern of the fragments of language and writing she produces is at once visual and tangible. In his essay "The Image of Proust," Benjamin noted that the Latin origins for "text," *textum*, means "something woven," a web, though—like memory—one more associative and tangled than precisely ordered.⁵ Silver's work embodies a similar sensibility and her background in textiles is inseparable from her approach here, connecting hand work to text work with clear awareness of the experiences evoked and encoded in the process of making. Silver conceives of text in its full materiality, and the delicately crafted textual fabric she produces in *Echolalias* speaks to the organic social and collective structures of language—deeply infused with human experience.

The hand-crafted dimensions of Silver's work are key to its poetic impact, as well as to its capacity for critique. Exploring how language inhabits the body, the time and space of the installation offers an alternative experience of language beyond conventional relationships with technologies of information and the "milieu of speed" that Paul Virilio suggests dominates the very materiality of places and things. Silver's work is in many ways both evidence and account of a culture of acceleration, one that has "caused us to lose what is time proper, the time for conception, the time for reflection."⁶ Upon this backdrop, the corporeality and intimacy of *Echolalias'* conditions of production are transformative, inscribed in its interwoven traces of past and present unfolding in real time, in our presence.

Images

Front & Interior: *Echolalias* (installation detail)