

ARTFORUM

“Pas Encore”

GALERIE SULTANA
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The writing's on the wall (and hanging from the ceiling, and encased in brick): A conceptual and material exploration of language, the group exhibition “Pas Encore” (Not Yet) addresses the muscle and frailty of the written word.

Text appears vulnerable and choked in two works by Jorge Méndez Blake. The ragged right edge of his wall painting—whose shape is based on a page of text from T. S. Eliot's “The Waste Land”—alludes to verse, but the words themselves are concealed. Resembling a horizontal bar graph, the lines of text are rendered as solid blocks. In *Monument à T. S. Eliot*, 2012, a paperback of Eliot's modernist poem acts as the linchpin in a precarious stack of bricks.

By contrast, Sergio Verástegui's *L'Art extérieur* (Exterior Art), 2011, testifies to print media's power to spawn and disseminate ideas (fact and fiction). In 2011, a Belgian magazine published a profile by Verástegui on a little-known artist named J. D. Wilde (who in fact does not exist). A framed copy of the article is presented above a reconstruction of one of Wilde's sculptures. An artist, an artwork, and an audience are born out of words on a page. Michael Wilkinson's *Crackdown triptych*, 2012, on the other hand, is a textless narrative of an actual historical event—a singled-out moment during the Paris protests of May 1968. Swaths of black paint are punctuated with photos and objects. A piece of chalk resting against the slatelike canvas suggests that history can be rewritten.

The most “far-out” linguistic exploration is Christophe Berdaguer and Marie Péjus's *Paroles Martiennes* (Martial Speech), 2012, whose source material comes from a nineteenth-century French psychic who claimed to communicate with Martians. Working with a linguistics research lab, the artists transformed audio of an actress reading the psychic's transcriptions of “Martian” into three-dimensional diagrams, and then used stereolithography to fabricate them into solid three-dimensional structures. The resulting white scribbles are suspended from the ceiling like enigmatic cartoon thought bubbles.

— Mara Hoberman



Michael Wilkinson, *Crackdown Triptych*, 2012, mixed media, 12' 6" x 13' 2" x 3".

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