

Kayne Griffin Corcoran

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Concrete Islands at Kayne Griffin Corcoran



Jean-Luc Moulène, *Boujie* (2016). Bone, concrete, 6.25 x 12.25 x 11.5 inches.

Image courtesy of the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London. Photo: Todd-White Art Photography.

Concrete Islands, currently on view at Kayne Griffin Corcoran, collects works by a group of artists who all engage histories of concrete poetry. From its first breath in Augusto de Campos' manifesto, concrete poetry was laid out as an attempt to unveil the materiality of words. In closing, de Campos screamed in all caps: "CONCRETE POETRY: TENSION OF THING-WORDS IN SPACE-TIME." (1)

In the large exhibition rooms at KGC the works are comfortably bathed in light and space. Even as they bask, the tension between things and words is palpable. It grows as you approach each artwork, as you get close enough to try and "read" them. Michael Dean's sculpture, *Analogue Series ("daysy"), fff unfinished notes* (2016), resembles a one-handed concrete slug slowly running away with a paperback book. The book is opened to a poem spelled out with assault rifles. The slug's single green hand is clenched in defiance between her body and head, calling out against the collusion of words with power.

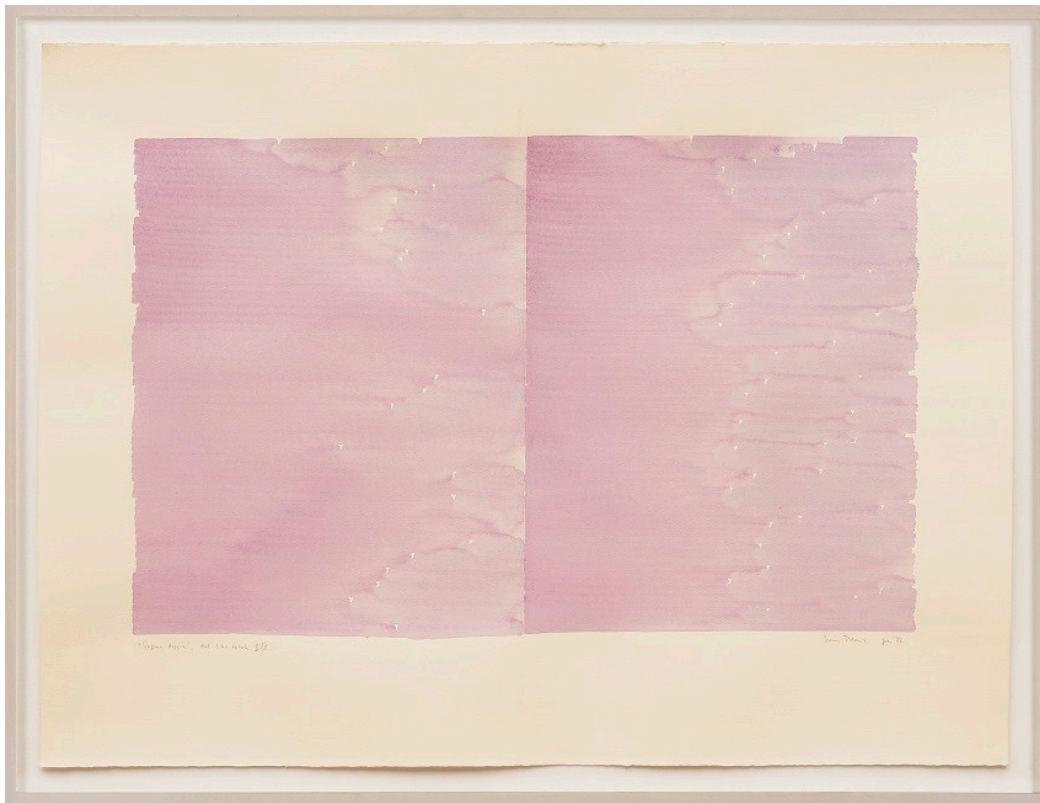
Miller, Nicholas G. "Concrete Islands at Kayne Griffin Corcoran," *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*. 30 November 2016. Web.

Like the inspiration for the exhibition—Marcel Broodthaers' *Pense-Bête* (1964)—Dean's piece is suspicious of words and tries hard to slather them with what feels concrete. This mistrust reverberates in the paintings by the sole woman in the exhibition, Irma Blank. Blank's *Radical Writings* series (1988) uses long, calm strokes of watercolor to express, in her words, the unsaid. These spaces of silence are cleverly broken only by the ugly text of a watermark, "C.M. Fabriano."

It's easy to forget that text wasn't always everywhere. At its best concrete poetry tunes its viewers to the form of text and the surfaces it adheres to. It is a way of looking and reading that can call dispel the mesmerizing power of a billboard, or, as we saw a few weeks ago, a simple slogan stitched onto hats.

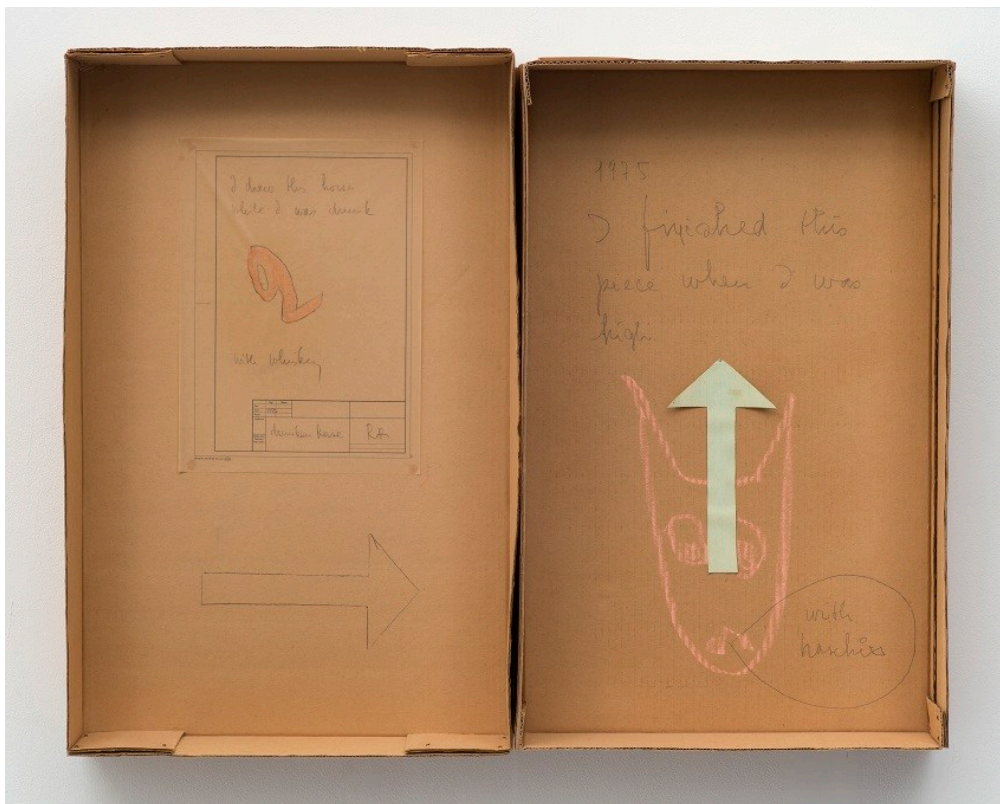
(1) Augusto de Campo, *Concrete Poetry: A Manifesto*. 1958.

Concrete Islands, curated by Douglas Fogle and Hanneke Skerath, runs from November 5, 2016–January 7, 2017 at Kayne Griffin Corcoran (1201 S. La Brea Ave.).

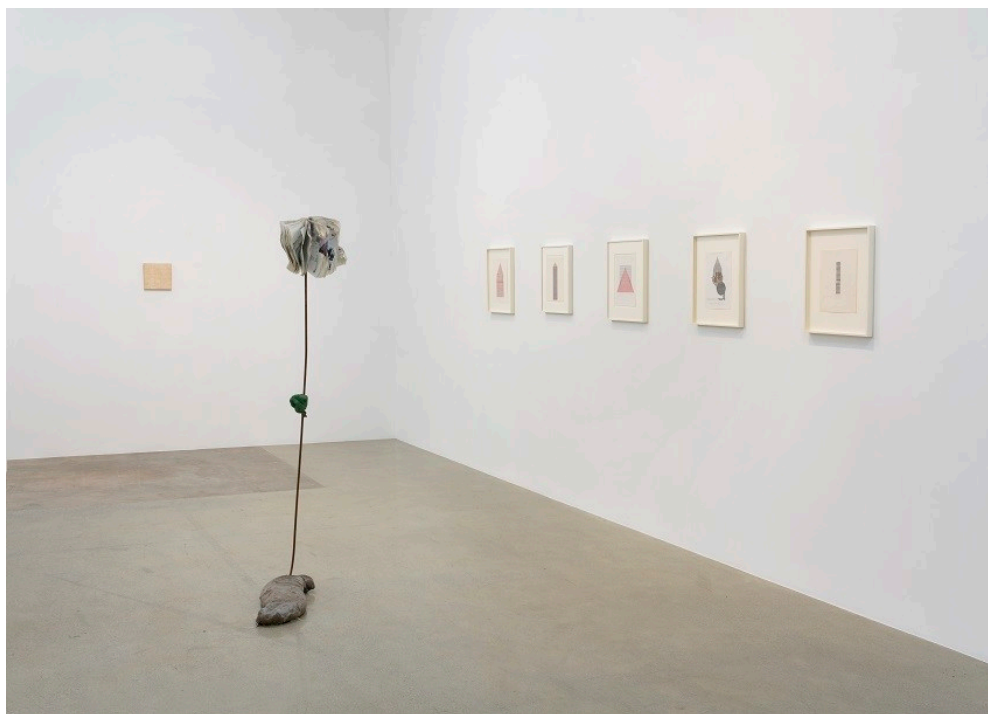


Irma Blank, *Radical Writings, Pagina doppia*, dal libro totale, IX, gennaio (1986). Watercolor on paper, 22.25 x 30 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and P420 Gallery, Bologna. Photo: Dario Lasagni.

Miller, Nicholas G. "Concrete Islands at Kayne Griffin Corcoran," *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*. 30 November 2016. Web.



Robert Filliou, *Drunken Horse*(1972/75). Cardboard, chalk, graphite, tracing paper, colored paper, 26.25 x 33.5 x 4.25 inches. Copyright the Estate of the Artist. Image courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery, London.



Concrete Islands (installation view) (2016). Left to right: Alighiero Boetti, Michael Dean, Henri Chopin. Image courtesy of Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.