

PRESS RELEASE

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AVEC DES MOTS

ASSUME VIVID ASTRO FOCUS / OMAR BA / GHADA AMER / ALIGHIERO BOETTI / WIM DELVOYE / FARBER & DUMONTIER / PHILIPPE FAVIER / JOSEPH KOSUTH / RAFAEL LOZANO-HEMMER / FABIAN MARTI / ANDREA MASTROVITO / CORNELIA PARKER / CARMEN PERRIN / JOSH SMITH

24, RUE DU VIEUX-BILLARD

Art Bärtschi & Cie proposes for its summer 2015 group exhibition a set of works gathered around the theme of text and words in art.

Text, in the broadest sense of the term, occupies a particularly important place in the development of 20th century art. From cubist to surrealist collages, from posters of the new realists to Pop-Art vignettes, from conceptual art to the Art & Language movement, the use of words in art is not new.

Fascinated by linguistic signs, artists often have fun diverting the graphism from its meaning and isolating words that, when taken out of their contexts, acquire new formal qualities. Thus, a signifier can become abstract or simply play with the visual and sonic materiality of language to free itself from its referential function.

The exhibition "With Words" presents works by artists who use language as their preferred medium in their work, such as Alighiero e Boetti, Joseph Kosuth, Josh Smith or Neil Farber & Michael Dumontier, but also works by artists who do not systematically work with text, thus indirectly testifying to its central place in the contemporary art scene.

At the entrance, four works by Cornelia Parker: three titles rewritten by her daughter while her mother cut the newspaper headlines and rewrote them. The fourth is a microscopic photograph of writer Charlotte Brontë's spout of the pen. Next to the latter, a happy coincidence, Emily Brontë appears in Andrea Mastrovito's work, on one of the two engravings conceived during his public project *Neverending End - 100 Last Pages* for which he invited the inhabitants of a Bergamo neighbourhood to give him the title of their favourite book. He selected 100 books, the last pages of which he tore off and then engraved in concrete slabs and integrated into the walls of the central square of the district.

Also designed for the public square, *Different (1000 platitudes)* by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is a photomontage of letters projected during the night onto various buildings in the city of Linz, Austria. They have been assembled to create words or expressions used to promote cities to potential investors. This work is reminiscent of the fluorescent neon lights in the work of Assume Vivid Astro Focus, the Franco-Brazilian duo of Eli Sudbrack and Christophe Hamaide-Pierson, who enjoy playing with lights and the acronym of their collective.

Opposite the latter is the very colourful *BOOM!* by Carmen Perrin. The text, hidden in the form of the explosive phylactery, recalls both the paintings of Roy Lichtenstein and the works of Op Art. Amused, the spectator is led to move in space to find the word he guesses by automatic association.

Finally, to the older works, Wim Delvoye's *Art Farm China limited* (2006) or Ghada Amer's famous *Lit* (1997) are added new works such as Fabian Marti's sculptures *Vides Poches* (2015) as well as those conceived especially for this exhibition: Omar Ba's painting *Africom* - the United States Command for Africa - a political work that echoes the power of words but also the power of man, and two collages by Philippe Favier, a meticulous cartographer who reveals the fantasy of his spatial imagination.

Between images and poetry, pasted, hidden, projected, illuminated, opaque or referential, the spectators of "Avec des Mots" are invited to come and decipher the series of signs and decipher the sentences of the ambiguous but fascinating universe of text in art.