

f r a n c e s c a k a u f m a n n

kaufmann repetto is happy to announce the first solo exhibition of Shannon Ebner in Italy, that will open Sunday, October 10 in the project room of the gallery's new space in via di Porta Tenaglia 7, Milan.

Over the past five years, Ebner has mined the porous territory of language by photographing words and letters that she both finds and makes in environments ranging from the landscape around Los Angeles to the space of the artist's studio.

Regarding *Dead Democracy Letters* (2002-2004), Ebner's breakthrough body of photographs, Tom McDonough writes that "the series documents temporary outdoor installations of six-foot-high cardboard letters, propped up to spell words and phrases of "ominous and urgent" import: nausea, raw, landscape incarceration, etc... these works develop a response to the state of the nation following the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq... When [Ebner] photographs the word nausea, the letters propped in the middle distance on dune grass, the ocean visible behind, she titles the work *USA*—playing with language to indicate a visceral revulsion more topical than the existentialist echo of *nausea* might suggest."

In more recent photographic works Ebner seeks to broaden her investigation of language to include the linguistic potential of the photograph itself, moving away from photographing politically charged words and phrases towards the construction of a mercurial visual system that includes images, objects, wallpaper applications of text phrases and videos. In a broad sense, Ebner's work can be seen as an ongoing investigation of visual and photographic semiotics that relies on depiction while also rejecting the notion that a photograph must be exactly *or only* what we say it is and in turn what it depicts.

"Ebner seeks to unsettle our vision and break down instrumentalized language—expressions of symbolic command—in all its forms." Tom McDonough

**Shannon Ebner**, born in Englewood, NJ, in 1971, lives in Los Angeles. She studied photography at Bard College and Yale University.

Selected solo shows: *Frieze Projects* (with Dexter Sinister), London, *Signal Hill*, Altman Siegel, San Francisco (2010), *Invisible Language Workshop*, Wallspace, New York (2009); P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY (2007).

Selected group shows: VI Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Luma Foundation Prize, 41<sup>st</sup> Rencontres d'Arles, Arles, France (2010); Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Learn to Read*, Tate Modern, London (2008); *Uncertain States of America: American Art in the 3rd Millenium*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2007).

In 2010 the Los Angeles County Museum of Art published *The Sun As Error*, a collaboration between the artist and Dexter Sinister.

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