

WALLSPACE

Paul Elliman

Hermes the Thief

September 7 - October 26, 2013

Opening reception Saturday, September 7th, 6-8pm



How was it?, 2013, smashed pens in the crystal method

Wallspace is pleased to announce *Hermes the Thief*, Paul Elliman's first solo gallery exhibition in the US, opening Saturday, September 7th and running through the 19th of October.

Elliman's practice, which follows language through many of its social and technological guises, reflects on a world in which typography, the human voice and bodily gestures emerge as part of a direct correspondence with everyday forms and sounds of the city.

The exhibition's title refers to Norman O. Brown's book of the same name, in which Hermes is cast not only as the inventor of many of the forms that our language takes, but also of the contradictory impulses that characterize its modern uses. Hermes is the messenger who cannot be trusted, a thief who became the patron of commercial culture, a master of the magic formula by which language binds us to things and actions through an ability to deceive and seduce.

For *Hermes the Thief*, Elliman presents a collection of works that explore a range of communicative formats, from trading beads and monthly magazines to the chimes of a ghostly night watch and the low-frequency 'rumbler' sirens currently used by the NYPD. One of the cornerstones of the exhibition is a 600+ pages untitled glossy magazine, referred to only as 'the September magazine'. Absent of editorial text and comprised instead of images that Elliman has been collecting for several years, the publication conveys in itself a kind of text spelled out in the gestural language of body shapes and signs. In Elliman's words: "In photographed fragments, the body seems both to correspond to the shapes of letters and to assume writing's inanimate agency. Or maybe another spirit altogether is communicated by the perverse range of images, a secret map of the inner territory of language conducted by the body."

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Also included is a selection from Elliman's *Found Fount*, an ongoing series in which urban flotsam is transferred into a diverse array of alphabet-like signs and punctuation marks. Here, as always, Elliman implicates language as its own untrustworthy protagonist operating at the limits of what we see, say or hear.

Paul Elliman lives and works in London. Selected recent exhibitions include: *KÕNDIDES MÕÕDA SALATEID (While walking on secret paths or while walking on salads)*, Kumu Kunstimuuseum, Tallinn, Estonia, 2013; *The Social Life of the Record*, castillo/coralles, Paris, 2013; *Deep Cuts*, Marres Centre for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, NL, 2012-13; *Now Here is Also Nowhere*, The Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, 2012-13; *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2012.

For further information or for images, please contact Nichole Caruso, nichole@wallspacegallery.com or 212-594-9478.