

'an oyster can't read this'

Amy Stephens
4th Sept - 9th Oct, 2015

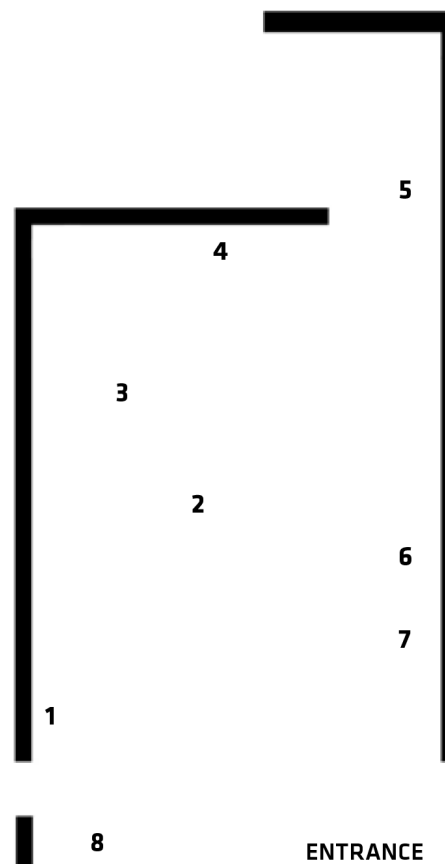
Oonagh Young Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new work by the London based artist Amy Stephens. The title of the exhibition is a minimal poem by the American poet Aram Saroyan, who was part of the International Concrete poetry movement in the sixties. Informed by Conceptual art and, in particular, photography, Saroyan intended to make poetry as immediately accessible as a photograph. With her minimal aesthetic and playful use of materials, Stephens alludes to the notion of language and this immediacy with new work made in response to her time spent in Norway and Iceland this year, where she created abstract forms and connections that endeavor to entice and confound.

Objects in the gallery appear to rest precariously on fragile architectonic metal stands, their lineaments perfectly aligned. These particular configurations make reference to the crystal structure of 'ilmenite', a weakly magnetic black titanium-iron oxide mineral commonly found in Norway. Combining household materials such as fabric and tape with more industrial materials like stainless steel, Stephens aims to denote a shared scheme where everything relates to everything else, especially architecture which reflects the symbiotic ordering systems of nature. Appropriating images of icebergs that provide a geological platform to highlight a perceived architectural presence, Stephens seeks to articulate homogeneity yet pitches synthetic materials against organic forms. These dichotomies indicate ruptures and discontinuities so what is suggested here is a plurality of temporalities reflected in the very ideology of concrete poetry or what Umberto Eco had termed the "iconic fallacy"—the fallacy that "a sign has the same properties as the object and is simultaneously similar to, analogous to, and motivated by its object."2

1. Aram Saroyan, *Complete Minimal Poems*, Ugly Duckling Presse, New York, 2007
2. Caroline Bayard, *The New Poetics in Canada and Quebec: From Concretism to Post-Modernism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 24. Eco's term appears in his *Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 191.

Amy Stephens received her MA from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London in 2008. Recent solo exhibitions include fig2 35/50, ICA Studio, London, UK (2015); Rocks Remember, William Benington Gallery, London, UK (2015); Catching the Big Fish, Minibar Artist Space, Stockholm, Sweden (2013); This Urban Silence, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland (2011); Recent group exhibitions include KITE, Haute Presents, Berlin (2015); Watershed, Work, Rest, Play and Politics of Water, Bexley, UK (2015);

Stephens was recently awarded the Villa Lena Artists' Residency, Tuscany, Italy (2015); AiR-Sandnes Artists' Residency Programme, Sandnes, Norway (2015); Triangle Network Award and International Fellowship to Muscat, Oman in association with Gasworks Gallery, London, UK (2013);(2008); Kunstmuseum Thun (2006); Mediamatic, Amsterdam (2006).



- 1 **Untitled**, 2015
Perspex, paper, pins
86 x 75 x 7.5cm
Edition of 3 + 1AP
- 2 **an oyster / can't / read this I**, 2015
Stainless steel, paint, wood, flock
106 x 55 x 18cm
- 3 **an oyster / can't / read this II**, 2015
Stainless steel, paint, wood, flock
148 x 58 x 18cm
- 4 **Freeze. Thaw I and II**, 2015
Silkscreen diptych on paper
Edition of 30
- 5 **Material Drawing I**, 2015
Collage
90 x 65 x 5cm
- 6 **Material Drawing II**, 2015
Collage
90 x 65 x 5cm
- 7 **Untitled**, 2015
Plaster, aluminium
178 x 30 x 32cm
- 8 **an oyster / can't / read this III**, 2015
Stainless steel, paint, wood, flock
60 x 37 x 20cm

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Opening hours:
11.00am - 1.00pm &
2.00pm - 6pm, Wed -Fri
or by appointment

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