

w. mark sutherland

# LANGUAGE DECOY

(or 230 statements, 40 questions and several ideas)

© 1992 the portable gallery



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**THIS ART PROJECT  
IS EXPENDABLE  
AND ONLY EXISTS  
AS AN IDEA OR  
POSSIBILITY**

**(not an act of ownership)**

THE PAST IN THE PRESENT  
THE PRESENT IN THE FUTURE  
THE FUTURE IN THE \_\_\_\_\_

(you are what you remember)

ALL READY SEEN...  
ALL READY READ...

(I can never match the unique qualities of the original)

# HISTORY WITH A CAPITAL H

(ex centrics remember the subject but forget the \_\_\_\_\_)

**TODAY  
NOTHING SEPARATES  
ARTHEORY**

**(is the rejection of strategies a strategy?)**



# HOW IS HISTORY MADE?

(memory versus forgetting)

**CLICHE + HISTORY + CULTURE  
= THEORY OF IMAGES**

**(language and mathematics conspire)**

THE INABILITY  
TO

---

IMPLIES  
ALL CONDITIONS  
ARE  
TEMPORARY

(what is edited out and by whom?)

# CORRECTION

(a demonstration of how line articulates a surface)

ACT  
OF  
CLOSURE

(between view and points of view)

**ALL WORDS ARE SUSPECT...**

**(is this the illusion of language or the congealed residue of intellect?)**

THE  
OTHER

(and the other)

EVERYTHING NOTHING

(value neutral)



DIS

(location)

**A COPY OF A COPY**

**(where is the original?)**

D

(centered)

THE ANSWER IN QUESTION  
HAS ONE L, TWO A's, ONE N,  
TWO G's, ONE U, AND ONE E

(subtext?)

O

(nothingness or the 15th letter of the alphabet?)

THE  
LANGUAGE  
OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY

(or a photograph of text?)

U TROPE IA

(a perfect wor/l/d)

# LANGUAGE

(packaged, regulated, distributed, circulated and consumed)



O

(a gaping hole leading nowhere)

LANGUAGE = A + B + SENCE

(schismatic racial grid)

O

(nothing)

**VERIFY THIS PHRASE**

**(who is doing the talking)**

NOTHING

(without tradition)

THERE IS A THIN LINE  
DIVIDING ART AND

---

ARTIFICE

(representation)

O

(signifiers ghost)

(N)EITHER  
TEXT  
(N)OR  
TABLEAU

(see what I mean)



THESE WORDS  
REFER BACK

(to other words)

**TWO AND THREE  
QUARTER INCHES**

(the distance between the artists eyes)

O

(a letter or a mathematical symbol?)

**GOOD TASTE  
GOOD BEHAVIOR  
GOOD SENSE**

**(received notions?)**

TWO  
INTERPRETATIONS  
OF  
INTERPRETATION

(sound and letters)

THIS SENTENCE MOVES  
FROM BEGINNINGS  
TO CONCLUSIONS,  
WHILE MAINTAINING  
THE INTEGRATY OF AN IDEA.

(fragmented time?)

THE RULING CLASS  
OF  
MEANING

(no ruptures or breaking points)

**(UN)  
FINISHED  
PRODUCT**

**(is this phrase derived from the absence of a related object?)**



HEARING  
MI/MI/CRY

(deformed emotion)

MY TH

(a question of ownership and authority)

## **(F)LAWS OF LANGUAGE**

**(structural fault in the text?)**

I *TALICS*

(site of sight)

**IN/AUDIBLE  
AND  
UN/KNOWN**

(recognition deferred)

TWO KINDS  
OF  
LOOKING

(a frozen gesture?)

# SOMETHING HIDDEN

(experience, language, representation, fragments, traces, possibilities, remains, shards)

**(MIS)READING  
THE RAGGED EDGES  
OF THE REAL**

**(authority uninterrogated)**



A CHANCE OPERATION:  
LUCK OR FATE?

(discuss)

# THE EXPOSED SUBJECT

(persistence of materials versus pretense of interpretation)

( )

DERIVED  
FROM THE ABSENCE  
OF A RELATED OBJECT

(an (un)finished statement)

**BETWEEN THE FACTS  
THERE IS NO PERFECT MODEL**

**(logical anarchy beyond the vanishing point)**

**(UN)FINISHED  
STATEMENT**

**(figure of speech)**

MEMORY

ANTICIPATION

(the answer is both of these)

**SURFACE AS GROUND  
GROUND AS SURFACE**

(trope?)

**FUNDA/MENTAL  
CONCEPT**

**(is experience congruent with thought?)**



**SQUARED<sup>2</sup>**

**(two of a kind)**

**THIS SENTENCE  
DENIES  
EVERYTHING  
IT  
ASSERTS**

**(the integrity of an idea)**

**FIGURE GROUND**

**(split)**

**THIS SENTENCE  
IS DERIVED  
FROM THE ABSENCE  
OF A RELATED  
OBJECT**

**(only a literary idea or a possibility?)**

DECAYING  
DECAYING  
DECAYING  
DECAYING  
DECAYING

(representation)

**ALL RECEIVED SYSTEMS  
ARE  
SUBJECT TO BREAKDOWN**

**(how do I know this is true?)**

**ANSWER QUESTIONS  
QUESTION ANSWERS**

(words are all we have to go on)

WORD OBJECT  
or

OBJECT WORD

(only words or ?)



BANG

(look at this sound)

**SUBTEXT<sub>1</sub>**

**(1 - a modest footnote)**

**TO BE DENIED  
AN  
EXPLANATION**

(what do you read words or thoughts?)

**DO NOT READ THIS**

**(it contains no information)**

MASTER COPY

(crimes of reason)

# OPTICAL WITNESS

(in the quirky absence of usefulness)

**UNDIGESTED  
KNOWLEDGE**

**(pushes against this phrase)**

# OPTICAL WITNESS

(in the absence of myth and autobiography).



UTTERABLE SOUNDS  
AND  
INSCRIBED MARKS

(a brief description of the surface)

**(WO)MAN**

**( suddenly a subject endowed with thought and will?)**

$$4 + 3 =$$

(an/other language)

DENIAL  
CONFRONTATION  
OBLIVION

(the axis of an/other theory)

ES THET IC

(just phonetics?)

**BLACK PRINT    WHITE PAPER**

**(value neutral)**

FO NET IK

(or phonetic)

# BRACKETING IN SIGHT

(the real questions remain un/answered)



S P A C E

(un/ comfortable choices permitted)

TRUE

FALSE

GROUND

SURFACE

(con/fused choice)

# WORDS

(more than the organization of sound)

# COMMON GROUND

(unconscious matrix or alternative future?)

A TO Z

(just a combination of letters and sounds?)

# COMMON SENSE

(or the residue of predictable habit?)

A  
PUBLIC  
PERFORMANCE

(where is the audience, spectator, viewer, reader situated?)

COMMON

(ground or sense?)



ACTS  
OF  
CONCEALMENT

(beauty is no longer possible nor desirable)

1234567890

(memory counter memory)

BEAUTY  
IS  
NO LONGER  
POSSIBLE  
NOR  
DESIRABLE

(acts of concealment)

**(IM) POSSIBLE TO IGNORE  
THE (RE)PRESENTATION  
OF THE REAL?**

**(without tradition)**

ERASURE

(something hidden)

UNIQUE  
ORIGINAL  
AUTHENTIC

(neutralize reality in stages)

# E M E R G E N C

(a simulated language event)

ILLUSTRATION  
ILLUSTRATION  
ILLUSTRATION  
ILLUSTRATION  
ILLUSTRATION

(five illustrations of a theory)



ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

(uttered sounds and inscribed marks)

\_\_\_\_ING  
\_\_\_\_ING  
\_\_\_\_ING

(transparent language and meaning)

BEAUTY  
IS NO LONGER  
POSSIBLE  
NOR  
DESIRABLE

(experience talking or just hollow words?)

AN  
(UN)EXECUTED  
IDEA

(revelation of the cognitive process)

**SPEECH  
LESS**

(the presence of absence)

**IS THE INTEGRITY  
OF AN IDEA  
SUPPORTED  
BY LANGUAGE?**

**(gesture in the compression of meaning and definition)**

TREE  
CHAIR  
HOUSE

(simplified images)

SAY  
SOMETHING  
ORIGINAL

(is this possible?)



# CIRCUMSTANCES

(a laboratory of thought)

**DOWN  
SIDE  
UP**

**(opposition and resistance)**

TEXTURE

(language decoy)

# REPETITION

(is there a choice?)

**SSSTTUUTTTEEEERRRR**

(inadequate language betrays a slip of the tongue)

**SDRAWKCAB**

**(or inside out?)**

# (UN)FIXED SIGNS

(multiple interpretative im/possibilities)

**REMEMBER TO FORGET  
FORGET TO REMEMBER**

**(the law of probability)**



**(UN)FIXED  
SIGNS**

**(awaiting the received notions of subject)**

# TEXTISTENTIALISM

(more than words and harmless objects)

**RAPID AND EMPTY  
BREAKS IN TIME**

(the crisis of space is to invent new space)

**SOCIAL (RE)FORM  
AND  
THEORY MATTERS**

**(the anxiety of hidden idea/ls)**

**(RE)SEARCH  
APPROXIMATIONS  
OF THE TRUTH**

**(to construct a model)**

DESCRIBING, NAMING,  
DENYING, ASKING  
QUESTIONS, TELLING  
STORIES, MAKING  
JOKES, CURSING,  
PRAYING

(interference zones)

DISAPPEARANCE  
NEGLECT  
ERASURE

---

(a demonstration of how line articulates surface)

**X  
POSED  
ON  
THE PAGE**

**(no negative space here)**



THE  
HYSTERICAL  
SUBLIME

(monstrous neologism)

TIME            BLURRING

STATIC        MEMORY

(transient environmental interference)

ISM

(a demonstration of how line articulates surface)

**TO BE DENIED  
AN EXPLANATION**

(the source of expectations)

# SUBSTITUE FOR HISTORY

(paratexts, hypertexts, architexts, metatexts?)

# PRODUCTION RE PRODUCTION

(design principle)

# TRUTH AND METHOD

(subtext; fragment versus whole)

# DERRIDADA

(acts of concealment)



TEXT

(a memory trap for experience)

# MEANING PRODUCER

(reader)

**THE INVISIBLE RESIDUE  
OF FRUSTRATION**

**(ineffable emotions)**

N:O:T:H:I:N:G

=

( )

SOMETIMES LANGUAGE  
IS AN  
EMPTY GESTURE

(see)

# SOUND OBJECT

(acoustic image)

**THE OPTICAL WITNESS  
PRIMED BY  
LITERATURE AND MYTH**

(adding, repeating, exhausting, reversing, canceling, stopping)

**RECOGNIZABLE  
WORDS  
ANCHOR  
MEANING**

**(but is thought produced in the mouth?)**



TODAY  
THERE ARE NO  
PRE LANGUAGE  
OBJECTS

( )

AN  
OTHER

(undermines the readers security)

REJECTION  
OF EXPERIENCE  
IS A REJECTION  
OF THEORY

(or rejection of theory is a rejection of experience)

**SOUND  
AND  
MEANING**

**(or the shape of letters)**

ABCDEFG THE OTHER SIDE  
HIJKLM OF THE ALPHABET

(more than words)

I

(link)

**VERIFY THIS PHRASE**

**(who is doing the talking)**

# GAPING HOLE

(leading nowhere)



VISUAL  
STRUCTURES  
ARE AN AID  
TO THINKING

(but can we agree on a consistent vocabulary?)

FROM  
PARAMETERS  
TO  
PARIMETERS

(without tradition)

UPON REFLECTION

(reverse)

EMPTY CIPHER

( )

**THE GROUND IS SHIFTING  
THE SURFACE EMPTY**

*(or shifting surface on an empty ground)*

**SIGN OBJECT**

(signifiers ghost)

•

POINT OF TRANSITION  
FROM THE SUBLIME  
TO THE \_\_\_\_\_

(representation)

**EVENTS  
VANISH**

**(do systems remain?)**



IF YOU DON'T KNOW  
THE WORDS  
TO SAY

(it's not worth saying)

TRANSLATING A SIGN  
OR INTERPRETING  
ANOTHER SIGN

(vice versa)

# REPETITION

(results in knotting and collapse)

ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

(all words are suspect)

\_\_\_\_\_ AND \_\_\_\_\_

(is this an original work or a copy?)

REPLACE THE SEARCH  
FOR TOTALITY BY  
INTERROGATING  
THE LIMITS  
OF

---

(everything is empty at the center)

AN  
(UN)EXPECTED  
IDEA

(revelation of the cognitive power)

EVERYTHING IS EMPTY  
AT  
THE CENTER

(loss or dispersal?)



**CONCLUSIONS  
ARE  
BETRAYED**

(by both beginnings and endings)