

## Adam Bateman, Artist Statement

My BA in English, fluency in Spanish, and study of Portuguese has made me interested in language. I'm interested in poetry, literature, writing, and linguistic and rhetorical theories. In my "Secondary Structures" project, the Minimalist forms I make signify *object*, and my choice of materials (books) signifies *language*. The combination of those two signifiers means *language as object*, or *object as language*. Both meanings are important to me.

The name of the project itself shares those meanings with the work. "Secondary Structures" refers to the "Primary Structures" show of Minimalist art in 1966 at the Jewish Museum and to (post)structuralism in linguistic theory. Language is made up of arbitrary symbols that, when arranged (or structured) in a certain way, have meaning. The *primary structure* of my sculptures is the text of the books, the *secondary structure* is the form made of books. In that way, the books actually work as signifiers (like words) and so the structured arrangement I make with them is analogous to writing.

The Conceptual artists, such as Joseph Kosuth and Robert Barry, among others, were also interested in linguistic theory. They saw *idea* as central to art, and following the linguistic theorists, argued that ideas occur in language. To show this in their art, they often used language (text) as image. Unlike the Conceptual artists, I am not concerned with *idea as art*; rather, I'm interested in *art as language*. Like they used language as image, I use language as object. I do this because I believe that objects, especially art objects, are signifiers like words and, all together, are a sign system that should be read, like one would read a text, to be understood. Reading the art-text and applying rhetorical or linguistic theories can inform the historical reading of the contemporary art world in surprising ways.