

Akurayri Statement

My work has questioned the relationship between language and objects, especially art objects, for the last several years. In the work included in this packet comes entirely from one of my most recent exhibitions. It is exemplary, I think, of the direction I'm moving. The exhibition was at the Akureyri Museum of Art in Akureyri, Iceland. All works were made in 2007.

The materials and images I have used for years, and the ones included in this packet, are all referents to language. They include books, alphabet soup, and text itself. The objects I make refer to art historical movements and works. I am influenced a great deal by Minimalism as the Minimalist artists were making objects that were to be seen as nothing but art-objects, by citing their works, but by using language-based materials, I create a parallel between art object and language, objects themselves becoming signifiers like words, that together, become a sentence or paragraph or poem. I have, of late, become interested in my cultural roots in Utah where landscape is important on many levels. It is important politically, geographically, culturally, economically, and as an important cultural and art historical symbol. My show in Akureyri became a conceptual landscape based both on my Utah identity, but also on the Icelandic landscape. An important note to this is that Haldor Laxness is a Nobel Prize winning author from Iceland who wrote a book called *Paradise Reclaimed*. This book is about Icelanders who emigrated to Utah after converting to Mormonism.

Tyrfingar is the name of the exhibition, it means *Soddings*. The name and the form both refer to traditional Icelandic houses that are built of stacked sod. The form, a rectangular form measuring 86"x64"x30" also refers to the art-object sculptures of the Minimalists. The stacked sod, in this case, however is stacked books. The books are held together by gravity and friction and were assembled in the gallery space.

Horizon. In this work I create a conceptual horizon that surrounds the entire exhibition. It is a simple line formed of arrows and words that are a direct progression of synonyms. I start with the word *horizon* and look it up in a thesaurus and write a synonym directly on the wall, separated from *horizon* by an arrow. I continue to write the synonym of the word I have just written until I have written over three thousand words and circumvented the entire gallery space and exhibition and I have arrived at last at the word *horizon*.

The third work is a 86"x86" digital print comprised of 64 grey squares. Each square is filled with a different density of text. The text says either "right slant, left slant, horizontal, or vertical." The words refer to the direction the text is written. Each square has one to four layers of text that create different densities of grey. This piece refers to the line drawings described by Sol Lewitt. I call it *Fields*.

The fourth is a 72" diameter circle of pasta letters painted black and placed on the floor of the gallery. This piece refers to Ad Rienhart's black paintings and to Damien Hirst's

fly painting as well as works by Minimalist Karl Andre. I call it *Beach* after the volcanic black sand beaches of Iceland.

The last is a video installation called *A Reduction of Meaning: Admirals in Collision*. This work is a 32 minute loop where I place books in a front-loader washing machine, insert quarters and soap, let the cycle run, then remove the pulp. This work has many meanings starting with the treatment of books as signifiers of language as objects, including references to humanity against nature, and referring to art historical paintings of boats on a stormy sea. The name is a play on linguistic theories and deconstruction, emphasizing both that the meaning is derived from the destruction of the objects, but also, that all the physical properties remain the same, just in a different form. The amount of glue, paper, cardboard, and ink remains constant, it has simply been reorganized, so the content, theoretically remains the same.

So the landscape is complete. It has a horizon, a building (that also become sedimentary strata), a beach, some fields, and some boats in a stormy sea. The landscape is at once a cultural signifier of Utah, and of Iceland and the bond between the two places; a installation of minimalist artworks, and a meta-commentary on the state of art itself.