

A Pause of Suspension 2014

2670 x 1850 x 200mm

Poem, powder-coated aluminum, ribbon, lead, cloth

Finalist 23rd Annual Wallace Art Awards 2014

This work is drawn from Emily Dickinson poem, No. 449 I died for beauty, and comprises laser-cut words threaded onto ribbons. Each of the 18 strands holds one line of the poem and hangs from the wall to the floor where they are held in place with lead weights. The cut-out sentences are delicate and extremely light weight allowing them to move in the slightest breeze. Their movement causes light reflections to run up and down the sentences.

The words are not easy to read with the ribbon running through the vertical lines hiding some of the text, but the formal structure of the poem is kept visible, with the ribboned text divided to reveal 3 stanzas. However, the number of lines per stanza deviates from their printed form and instead represents the arrangement of the original hand written manuscript.

A Pause of Suspension is perhaps not an obvious translation from sound to visual, but by transporting the poem from the written word on paper to the written word as object this work proposes another way of relating to words. Through changing the activity of seeing and reading, by highlighting their physical nature, I am attempting to activate the sound element of the words.

The title of this work is from Noah Porter's 12 rules of inflection, based on the natural 'conversational' inflections. Rule IV: The pause of suspension, denoting that the sense is unfinished, requires the rising inflection.

Noah Porter, Rhetorical Reader (1837)