Interview with

SAM WINSTON

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Whether the line walks with language is a question for me. The problem always results from the language and in the language. The language is not just a tool...p reducing it to a back-to-front picture is a mistake, by using many intermediate elements, to always manage to present the interpretation of the situation: uniting the starting point through the visually engaging work.

How we see the existing land is something that is related to the land. The following is a fillet of the question: how the language is the question and in the language. The language is not just a tool...p

Kurosawa: I think the question is about the question: how the language is the question and in the language. The language is not just a tool...p
(14) "I think drawing is a dialogue between the sculptor and the work in progress. It's about understanding the material and how it behaves. For me, it's a process of exploration and discovery." - Artist A

(15) "In my studio, I like to work on a series of projects simultaneously. It allows me to explore different ideas and techniques. Each project is like a puzzle, and solving it requires patience and perseverance." - Artist B

(16) "The collaboration with the architect on this project was crucial. It allowed us to integrate the art and architecture in an innovative way." - Artist C

(17) "I always try to incorporate elements of nature into my work. It gives it a sense of connection and depth." - Artist D

(18) "My work is often characterized by its sense of movement and fluidity. I try to create pieces that are both visually striking and thought-provoking." - Artist E

(19) "I'm interested in the relationship between art and technology. I believe they can complement each other in new and exciting ways." - Artist F

(20) "I love to experiment with different materials and techniques. Each project is a new challenge and an opportunity to learn something new." - Artist G

(21) "The process of creating art is a journey. It requires dedication, creativity, and a willingness to take risks." - Artist H

(22) "I try to capture the essence of a place through my work. It's a way of freezing a moment in time and sharing it with others." - Artist I

(23) "For me, art is a form of communication. It's a way of expressing emotions and ideas." - Artist J

(24) "I'm always fascinated by the beauty and complexity of natural forms. They inspire me to create work that is both organic and abstract." - Artist K

(25) "Art should be accessible to everyone. It should be able to speak to people on a universal level." - Artist L

(26) "I believe art has the power to transform lives. It can heal, inspire, and connect people in profound ways." - Artist M

(27) "Art can also challenge societal norms and provoke thought and discussion." - Artist N

(28) "I try to create work that is both functional and beautiful. It's a way of improving people's lives and enriching their experience of the world." - Artist O

(29) "For me, art is a form of meditation. It allows me to explore the complexities of the human experience." - Artist P

(30) "Art should be a reflection of the times we live in. It should capture the essence of our culture and society." - Artist Q

(31) "I believe art has the power to bring people together. It can create a sense of unity and shared purpose." - Artist R

(32) "Art can also be a form of resistance. It can challenge and subvert the status quo." - Artist S

(33) "I try to create work that is both political and poetic. It's a way of expressing complex ideas in a way that is accessible and thought-provoking." - Artist T

(34) "I'm interested in the relationship between art and the environment. I believe they are intrinsically linked." - Artist U

(35) "For me, art is a form of self-expression. It allows me to explore my own identity and personal experiences." - Artist V

(36) "I try to create work that is both experimental and traditional. It's a way of honoring the past while pushing the boundaries of what is possible." - Artist W

(37) "Art should inspire people to think differently and see the world in new ways." - Artist X

(38) "I believe art has the power to heal. It can help people process difficult emotions and experiences." - Artist Y

(39) "Art can also be a form of escapism. It allows us to imagine a world that is different from our own." - Artist Z

(40) "For me, art is a form of storytelling. It's a way of sharing stories and experiences with others." - Artist AA

(41) "I believe art should be a reflection of the diverse and complex nature of our world." - Artist BB

(42) "Art can also be a form of activism. It can be a platform for social and political change." - Artist CC
In Sam Winston’s studio in Seattle the lamps he uses to light his work are as much a part of his practice as the materials he works with. He has a unique and innovative approach to his work that is reflected in his process and the way he uses light in his installations. His work is an exploration of the relationship between light and space, and the way we perceive the world around us.

Winston’s studio is a workspace where he can experiment with different light sources and techniques. He uses light to create dramatic and immersive environments that engage the viewer in a way that is both physical and emotional. His work is a reflection of his own personal journey and the influence that continues to inspire him.
Please fill us in on the details about this artwork including the theme, concept, process, techniques and materials. (referring to three line drawings called – ‘live today’ – ‘silent listen’ and ‘I will always’)

This series of drawings were done after I had spent some time thinking about how we speak. It was mainly around the idea that when we say something it’s our pitch, tone of voice and intonation all effect what is said. And to translate that onto the page seemed like an interesting project.

Since the last time we interviewed you, have you changed your thoughts about creation at all? Or developed a new understanding?

At present I am really enjoying being very physical in creating work. There really is something about the physicality of making an artwork that makes you own it. The actual experience of using the body, hand and eye means that you become very absorbed in the work itself – so much so that at times it can be hard to distinguish the two.

How do you draw your ideas for words and stories in your artwork?

I tend to work with two types of text – either factual/quantitative (dictionaries, encyclopedias and timetables) or fictional/expressive (fairy tales, poetry). I think I am happiest when both these forms are being used by saying that images are great at succinctly being reduced to a noise.

Once the word is on the page in cannot be changed. It falls down to the person’s relationship to technology, I respect it but don’t worship it.

What are the advantages of artwork created through analogue techniques?

I think that goes back to a previous point and it’s that it is simply one of many tools to be used. I would argue that printing is just another tool like drawing or painting. We employ our hand as a tool and so we employ other mechanisms to make marks. I try and view them all as the same thing – the hand, the pencil, the eye and the press. What I am attracted to in all of this is the imperfections in them. Each one will let us down or do something that it is not intended. That is when something interesting has happened.

Do you think there are certain things, which digital techniques can’t capture? If yes, please give details...

Spontaneity. But in saying that it comes down to the user. If the operator uses a machine with too much respect the machine will be in charge and the results will be formal. If the user has no respect the result can be messy or even non-existing at all. It falls down to the person’s relationship to technology, I respect it but don’t worship it.

What are the possibilities and what is the attraction of ‘printing’ as a technique?

I can’t really call this a favourite book because it seems to do more than just tell a story. If you were to read the cover, it would say it’s a man’s tale of survival in Auschwitz but that doesn’t explain the what the books about. For me this is a story both about the darkness and most brilliant parts of what it is to be human. It’s one of the few books that I’ve read that stops being literature and becomes an essential part of our cultural history. If there is any book I’ll wish anyone to read it is this.


The Invention of Morel starts off as diary entries of a man marooned on an island, and as the plot unfolds you find that he is not alone. The thing that is interesting within this story is that you’ll unsure as to whether the main character is fictitious, or that we’re experiencing his fantasies. His diary entries record his relationship to mysterious people, yet they never seem to acknowledge him. You’re reading a story but you don’t know whose story it is.

I’ve decided to choose five books I’ve been working with over the last ten years on a project called Orphan. I have been cutting these books up to reform them into new stories - so these are not just books I like but also books that I feel, have enough depth to create multiple readings. These books are by writers that seem to use language in a non-traditional way. I wanted to bring oxygen into an area that sometimes only looks inward for its inspiration – instead of taking great design books as the point of departure, for me it seems to be a valid starting point.

Levi, Primo (1998). IF This is a Man / The Truce. London: Abacus; New edition edition. p138. The thing that’s interesting for me about Joyce was that he was one of the first authors I encountered that seemed to write in a way that was sympathetic to how thought can be wild and non-linear. “Pride and hope and desire like crushed herbs in his heart sent up vapours of maddening incense before the eyes of his mind. He strode down the hill amidst the tumult of sudden rising vapours of wounded pride and fallen hope and baffled desire. They streamed upwards before his anguish eyes in dense and maddening fumes and passed away above him till at last the air was clean and cold again”

Rilke. Letters to a Poet as a Young Man

This book felt important because it was as if you were being spoken to by a voice from a different generation. A creative who had a lifetime worth of experience in making, writing and dealing with what it is to be an artist. In his letters to the young poet, he manages to convey a very genuine and sincere care to the dilemmas of this aspiring creative. This book makes you want to, and also work out what’s worth saying.

Paterson, Don (2006). Orpheus: A Version of Rainer Maria Rilke. London: Faber and Faber. p31. I don’t know how many designers or visual artists read poetry but, for me, I see a great correlation between how poets work with language and how the designers operate in the visual sphere. By being able to pull references from multiple directions and tie them into a cohesive whole - poet and designer share many commonalities. One of the most important things in my learning has been reading outside of my comfort zone. That for me has led me to some of the more interesting discoveries. In truth, if I was to recommend one thing and one thing only, it would be this – read something that challenges what you know.

http://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/bookshelf-sam-winston
MAHESH BHANSLALI

The purpose of an unassuming man keeping in touch with his own humanity by giving others a chance to see the world.

In some ways my trip to India ended on pretty much the day it began—ended in that sometimes a message can be so gloriously obvious, so blazingly clear that it really doesn’t have to be repeated to be understood. This lesson began to unfold on the first day of my journey and I came in the form of an average looking Indian man called Mahesh Bhansali.

On my train journey from Delhi to Bhopal, I sat across three very unremarkable Indian men—the only thing that stood out about one of them was that he offered me a lift for the final leg of my journey, which I happily agreed to.

Now most people, myself included, bring something to the table. A certain part of us wants to be seen in a particular light and another part of us is looking for things that interest us. As this man was kind enough to offer me a lift, I wanted to find out what he was bringing to the table.

In the car journey, I found out that he is a diamond merchant from Gujranwala and runs many different charitable trusts—one of which he was visiting in Bhopal. So he asked me why I was there, I told him about my meditation practice and wanting to visit the Bhopal tree (the tree under which the Buddha became enlightened). I also mentioned my school of meditation being Tibetan Nyingma. This turns out to be a coincidence because the project he was running was temporarily housed in a Nyingma monastery, where he invited me to visit. The following twenty-four hours were very strange.

Within half an hour, I was holding part of a seventy-year-old lady’s eyeball and watching a droning doctor as I thought, okay, this is surreal. Mahesh Bhansali is a rather remarkable person. I was holding the metal in an operating theatre that formed part of a field hospital that, over the next twenty-four days, would carry out over twenty thousand cataract operations on the poor locals. Over three days, Bhansali hoses, feeds and cares for each patient before sending them home with wads. It seems that the money he makes from the diamond trade goes on to fund staff of two thousand that can manage different charitable projects all across India.

Through a mix of enthusiasm and invitation, we agreed it was a good idea that I stayed on for a while.

The best way to explain this experience is to maybe describe my first working day. I rose at 5.00 am to make my way down to the Bodhi tree where I did my morning practice. The tree itself is surrounded by beautiful marble towers and at four in the morning, with meditating monks chanting in Sandik and the riots, it is certainly a place beyond one time. It is not really fit for description except that it is not part of this world.

I would then take breakfast with the doctors at seven in the mesh hall and start work soon after. In the infirmary the smell that greets you is that of an old person’s home—it reminded me of my own grandparents that have now gone. As the mornings passed, I began to notice something quite remarkable. As you removed their bandages, you realised that some were all ready to see again. With a mix of fear and joy, they would look into the space beyond. It is amazing to witness sight returning to another human being. A gift.

It was also a real joy to see the aspirations in my morning meditation being met so immediately in the preceding hours.

With the certainty of knowing I was going to make art, I once told my partner that I was going to make books. The remarkable thing about the aspiration was not the goal at the end but the conviction I felt towards it. Somewhere beyond knowing, it was a physical feeling that told me this was how things should be. Halfway through my stay with Bhansali, the same feeling arose again. This time, the aspiration was not towards a creative endeavor but towards a more common sense of humanity.

I mentioned what people bring to the table because after spending a week near Bhansali, I never found out who he was. Even tough by description, he sounded grand but did not embody any of that. He came across as a simple man who was in touch with his own humanity. He was someone who didn’t bring anything to the table, and it made for the most remarkable meeting I have had.

Sometimes, by caring for others, here was a person that was living as a human should. In the complicated web of our lives he felt like someone who had truly returned home.

It was a place that I hope we all have the chance to visit.
WORDS AS IMAGE & OBJECT

SAM WINSTON uses words and images as materials for his work. ESTHER DUDLEY reflects on his recent lecture.

"WRITING AS PRACTICE, OR HOW I DEVELOVE IMAGE DESIGN," says Sam Winston, the photographer and theorist of his relationship with language, to a group of students at the University of Chicago, where he teaches. He has always believed in the power of text to transform the world around us. His work often involves the recombination of words and images, creating new meanings and possibilities. Winston's approach has been to embrace the medium's potential, to use words as images and vice versa, creating a new kind of visual language.

In his lecture, Winston discussed his recent project, "The Language of the Underground," which explores the relationship between language, image, and the written word. He showed examples of his work, including his "Lexicon" series, which uses a combination of text and images to create a new kind of visual language.

Winston's approach is to use words as images and images as words, creating a new kind of visual language that can be read and interpreted in multiple ways. His work often involves the recombination of words and images, creating new meanings and possibilities. Winston's approach has been to embrace the medium's potential, to use words as images and vice versa, creating a new kind of visual language.

Winston's work is located in various special collections including the New York Public Library, the Chicago Public Library, and the National Library of Australia. His work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group shows around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the Tate Modern in London.

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A short introduction to Sam Winston and "reported story"

Sam Winston is a graphic designer and illustrator based in London. His work is often described as "reported," meaning it is based on real-life experiences and events. His designs often incorporate a variety of materials and techniques, creating a unique and visually engaging style.

"reported story" is an ongoing project by Sam Winston, where he creates illustrated stories based on real-life experiences. Each story is accompanied by a detailed description and annotations, providing readers with a deeper understanding of the underlying themes and messages.

For more information, please visit Sam Winston's website at www.samwinston.com or follow him on social media for updates on his latest projects and releases.
RICHARD MILWARD & SAM WINSTON

INTERVIEWED BY SARAH FAIRBROTHER

Britain’s Most Artistic Young Wordsmiths Discuss Inspiration and Fairy Tales, From Folded Dictionaries to Pill-Popping Beauties

Back in 2005, a 21-year-old Richard Milward was saying Reclaimables, trying to get the money together for a proper drink. Just over a year on, and the St Martin’s art student has faced widespread success with his debut novel Apple. The book is set in a small estate in his hometown, Widnesbridge, and features various RDD sufferers Adam as he attempts to win the pill-popping school beauty Ann. Milward has already held his first art exhibition and plans to go on a “wonderful and wonderful” European tour with his writing in 2006. Another antidote to words is 29-year-old Sam Winstone, although he minces on a razor-thin distinction between the practice of art and writing. His epigraphic works include & Folded Dictionary, a kind of sculpture in which the pages of the full Oxford English Dictionary are folded 80,000 times, giving words that might never have met a chance to become acquainted. On a dark writer’s night, Milward paid a visit to Winstone’s and Landies studio and raised the question of whether a picture really paints a thousand words.

Richard Milward: I wish they’d say that writing comes first, out of writing and art.
Sam Winstone: Is it like?
RM: Oh yeah, absolutely! Words would knock pictures out of the ring, if it were how you sort of want to frame everything in language. I feel like, when people look at a painting, they want to turn it into words.
SW: At The Poetry Library, they told me, “Why don’t you start up and give a talk about what you do?” I thought that was interesting because it comes from a literary culture. Whereas in the art world, or art departments, you don’t talk about the work, the work speaks for itself. You put it on a wall, you walk away, that’s it.
RM: There’s a valid point. People like York, Reeves are good, because he’s very officially a classic, but you can go on to his website and just get him as an artist.
SW: I was a student writer. I always write. Writing’s my job. Writing is my love. I realise that the act of it is a really really different understanding of it.
RM: You’re a better writer?
SW: Yeah. I never remember writing a story as a kid, and I kept changing the theme because I was going backwards and forwards in time. For me, it was a revelation, but at the same time that it wasn’t real, this is a revelation.
RM: Is it, yeah. Going back with words is easier to be understood within a fine art context. With something like & Folded Dictionary, people really want to go back and forth. It’s a writer’s book. Something for trades. No publication.
SW: I don’t change the format of it, it’s sometimes it’s a folded dictionary, sometimes it’s a published book — people kind of go, “Is it a book?” I like that it’s in there, it’s not going somewhere.
RM: For me, writing and drawing aren’t separate things. I guess it’s the mark you make on the world, and it’s the world you get back. This is the world you get back. It’s the one I could write and be part of the world.
SW: I’d love to be part of the world, I’m quite obsessional. In my back, Adam’s obsession — for example, I wouldn’t get OCD, but when I sit down to write, it’s like a ritual. The more I sit down to write, the more I write. I don’t want to do anything else, it’s like a ritual.
RM: That’s weird. I’m a pro Luddite.
SW: I’m interested in exploring obsessions too. I just finished all those platforms for a show. I always set out with really good ideas, about mechanics, and great art, whatever that is, but then I get a bit too into it and I’m like, god, I’m really bored, it becomes mundane, it becomes a song, and it loses its genius.
RM: That’s why I like it.
SW: How’s the food, by the way? I write all day, do I have to eat or do I have to eat? I go through most phases of being dead-end about everything I write, then suddenly, maybe it’s just a yellow stone that’s just going on somewhere or something, I’m going, God, this is absurd, comedy. I never get that sort of mundanity aspect. Only because I don’t sit it to nine to five, Apple took me two years and a half to write. All these sorts of me really quickly. Do you feel you’re going to be alone when you’re working?
SW: With writing, yes. With imaging, no. Do you see a lot of parallels between your pictures and your words or not?
RM: Yeah, definitely. I think it’s all based on stories or little happenings. Or even from thinking of Lewis Carroll. Alice in Wonderland is a beautiful book, with its unstable and mad rhymes.
SW: I’ve used fairy tales in my work. The world of Monster is really intriguing. You’re proper able to process yourself in that universe. I’m guessing that Lewis Carroll was an author that didn’t draw and systematically figure out the plot structure. Alice in Wonderland is one of the three witches. Nursery rhymes along the floor, and that’s not scary, but it’s brilliant. And Bad — there’s something that popped into his mind, and brought back some amazing story.
RM: I think brilliance is dead-enderd. I’d love to be seen as mad. We all go a little mad sometimes, as they say.
UNLIMITED EDITIONS

When is a book not a book? When an artist gets hold of it. Francesca Gavin looks at art's appropriation of literature.

"At the beginning of the 1990s, the idea of art becoming a writer was as much an act as using the book format," she explains. "Almost books selected to be a research laboratory for book design. The small, narrow book format, narrow or otherwise, can be a source of innovation. In my current show for the University of the Arts, I am using the computer as a tool to design and experiment with new forms. I am exploring the use of new technologies and investigating the way in which they can be used to change the book." Book publishing seems to be in a new era. Books are no longer just read but are also used in performance art and installations. Architects, designers, and artists are all looking to the book as a medium to express their ideas. In recent years, the book has become a canvas for artists, and the result is a new form of art that combines literature, design, and architecture. The book is no longer a passive object but is instead a dynamic piece of art that can be used in a variety of ways.

Philip Haas's "Unlimited Editions" is one such example. The book is a collaboration between the artist and a group of designers and architects. The book is published in a limited edition of 500 copies, each of which is unique and hand-bound. The cover is a collage of images, and the pages are printed on different types of paper, creating a sense of depth and texture. The book is a commentary on the nature of art and the role of the artist in society. It is a celebration of the beauty and complexity of the book as an object and as a medium for expression. The book is a reminder that the book is not just a tool for information but is also a medium for creativity and innovation.
This focus of experimentation on book form and design has to be a result of the over-commodification of modern society. Something handmade, reflecting thought and craft has a kind of intimacy that connects directly to something human in the reader.

The book is an index of thought and a device for contemplation. It is the act of reading that is the act of thinking. The pages are blank, waiting to be filled with the reader's own thoughts and ideas. The book is a tool for self-expression, a canvas for the reader's mind. It is a portal to new worlds of imagination and creativity. Through the act of reading, the reader becomes an active participant in the creation of meaning, weaving their own narrative into the tapestry of the text.

In many ways, the book is a metaphor for life itself. It is a journey, a quest for knowledge and understanding, a search for meaning in the chaos of existence. The reader is invited to engage with the text, to explore the ideas presented, and to make their own discoveries. The book is not just a means of communication, but a catalyst for personal growth and self-discovery.

As the reader turns each page, they are invited to reflect on their own experiences and perspectives, to connect with the ideas presented, and to engage with the text on a deeper level. The book is a conversation between the reader and the writer, a dialogue that continues long after the last page has been turned. It is a timeless reminder of the power of words, the importance of ideas, and the enduring nature of the human spirit.
SAM WINSTON

is interested in the spaces between words. It is this space that he experiments with in his drawings and altered books. "I like to treat words as structure," says Winston of his work. "For stylists as I have a very special relationship with words, it took me a long time to work that out."

In his most recent project, he finished on the same day that we went to press, tape-drawn letters clustered in a sea of red watercolor. It presents a move away from the collage and cut-up techniques of his earlier pieces. Here he lets the letters float in space, seemingly with no order between them.

London-based Winston is like a beaver Fermi of graphic art, using deconstruction as his means of experiment. For his Made-Up True Story from 2007, he mixed popular children's stories such as Jack and the Beanstalk and Snow White with information based on sources like newspapers, timelines and encyclopedias, experimenting with how the reader perceives words and information.

In the more recent Peel Off Drawing, he demonstrates the writing everyone itself, cereally positioning the peel drawing into a circular shape. It's a wordless ode to the ubiquitous tool, stemming from Winston's fascination with the white page that all his projects start with. "I always get disappointed when I put a mark on the page because I can't believe it is never how I imagined it, so I decided to take the words apart instead."

www.samwinston.com
Do you feel that contemporary uses language as a crutch?

Language feels to be in a similar place a lot of culture at the moment - basically it doesn’t know what is going on because it’s in such a rapid rate of change – a change that has come about through technological development.

As Guttenberg’s book shaped the face of western culture, we now have a rival development – the web - and it’s advances are just as far reaching.

In that context I think language is used in two ways. It either contains and maintains systems – the book, handwriting etc. or it becomes a new tool in changing it – tweets, hypertexts, rss feeds. My feeling is that we need it in both roles right now.

Do you still use a physical dictionary or do you look words up on-line?

I always look words up online - my adult life has been digital. But that is not a complete answer.

The idea of the physical - whether it’s a book, paper or print – has a very important role to play right now. The digital environment is great at a certain type of communication but it comes at a cost - the sensual. Rather than just the use a single sense - dead tree formats still relay on multiple senses to communicate.

To put it quite simply – you can’t touch online.

What words repulse you?

I’m repulsed by repulse.

I’m joking – Generally I find words themselves fairly amicable things. They tend to be good at doing what they are supposed to do and when used in moderation – they are very helpful.

I do though sometimes have a problem when we misuse them or worse - take them seriously. For example when I insist on the use of my word being the correct over the use of yours.

Take beauty - I believe we are all able to be touched by something in a way that we can’t necessarily explain but when I insist it’s called ‘art’ and another insists it’s called ‘nature’ and a third is to call it ‘god’ - we get in real problems.

I find this often arises when we use words to collapse our understanding of the world rather than expand it.

Do you read linear narratives or are you a fan of experimental literature?

I have a real love of literature that is on the edge of coherence. That means Borges, Perec, Joyce and Calvino were incredibly important to me when I was learning how to read for a second time. I found their understanding and use of language a lot more honest than conventional writing.

Are you particularly attracted to text - oriented artists like Ed Ruscha?

I think I have more an affinity to the writers than the painters. But that is not to say I don’t love the image. People like Miró and Dieter Roth were visual people than generated fascinating languages.

What words appeal to you the most - regardless of context?

I’m a little obsessed with interjections at the moment - those certain nuances that don’t fit exactly into our printed world - the ‘umms’, ‘ahhs’ and ‘errs’ that pepper our conversations.
Volume, a striking exhibition by the young writer and cartoonist Sam Winston, is currently being housed in the Saison Poetry Library. Visitors will also be able to handle, mid-stride, by the work full-spread Dictionary (2004). Each book of a twenty-volume, soft cover English Dictionary is displayedspayed open, its pages folded into triangles in order to create a series of jagged ridges along the spine of the book. What Winston has given the viewer looks like twenty miniature alien mountain ranges, disguised as reference books. The specificity of material is essential to Winston's work. As a writer who is often described as a graphic designer, his process is described by the viewer as the ‘fascinating world’ provocatively work. Volume does, indeed, 'look at face value, a little puerile as an expression alphabets of type, paper, colour line and form. 'woollen gloves the viewer must wear to turn of their materiality is made evident by the white mountain ranges, disguised as reference books. The viewer looks like twenty miniature alien mountain ranges, disguised as reference books. Winston and the Awakened Text

Winston complements his dedication to poetry by employing objects with a steady line of work in advertising. Layout we have come to expect. We are unable in it’s tortured midst. The pictorial language doesn’t mean you can guess that there is some kind of Q & A chunks of type alternate with even shorter chunks of type, forcing us to question the way we process meaning. The viewer is so intrigued and started by Volume because the exhibition works to block our well-honed skills of de-coding the text object. forcing us to question the way we process meaning. The viewer is so intrigued and started by Volume because the exhibition works to block our well-honed skills of de-coding the text object.

Winston’s tour de force is his New Folded Dictionary (2004). Each book of a twenty-volume, soft cover English Dictionary is displayed spayed open, its pages folded into triangles in order to create a series of jagged ridges along the spine of the book. What Winston has given the viewer looks like twenty miniature alien mountain ranges, disguised as reference books. The specificity of material is essential to Winston’s work. As a writer who is often described as a graphic designer, his process is described by the viewer as the ‘fascinating world’ provocatively work. Volume does, indeed, 'look at face value, a little puerile as an expression alphabets of type, paper, colour line and form. 'woollen gloves the viewer must wear to turn of their materiality is made evident by the white mountain ranges, disguised as reference books. The viewer looks like twenty miniature alien mountain ranges, disguised as reference books.

Winston complements his dedication to poetry by employing objects with a steady line of work in advertising. Layout we have come to expect. We are unable in it’s tortured midst. The pictorial language doesn’t mean you can guess that there is some kind of Q & A chunks of type alternate with even shorter chunks of type, forcing us to question the way we process meaning. The viewer is so intrigued and started by Volume because the exhibition works to block our well-honed skills of de-coding the text object. forcing us to question the way we process meaning. The viewer is so intrigued and started by Volume because the exhibition works to block our well-honed skills of de-coding the text object.
SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD TO SWIM IN A PUDDLE THAT'S NOT YOUR OWN

I am 8pm and I am talking to Sam Winston on Skype. He is sitting in sunny Miami, talking me about his high school graduation from Harvard in Religious Studies at the age of 72, whilst I am falling about with a voice recorder.

A: Recording started… what time is it over there at the moment?
B: It is… coming up to 4 O'clock. Can you see outside? I've put the laptop outside the window and it is palm trees… you can't really see, can you?
A: Just about. Why are you in Miami - quite the place to be now?
B: It is… coming up to 4 O'clock. Can you see outside? I've put the laptop outside the window and it is palm trees… you can't really see, can you?
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AN INTERVIEW WITH SAM WINSTON, A TYPOGRAPHIC ARTIST UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Who is your favorite artist/poet/novelist/politician?
Italo Calvino, Primo Levi, Kenny Goldsmith, Viera da Silva, Tom Friedman, Aung Sun Suu Kyi, Chongyem Tenpa, Dom Sylvester Howard, Maurice Sendak and Bernie Glassman.

Have you developed a new understanding of text through your art?
One of my favorites – and often repeated phrases is – more than half of language is silence. Be it spoken word or printed text – it has to be framed within space – and that space lets meaning exist. So if anything has developed through my art it is a deep appreciation of this generosity of space that we all have been given. Once that’s in place it is quite easy to let things appear on the page or in the world.

Do you find it hard to distinguish yourself from your work?
The idea of owning the work – when I say that I am referring to learning from what is happening when I am making the piece. I would say I really own a project or artwork when it has taught me something I didn’t know. And then that will feed my sense of value. Intrinsically I feel learning is the only type of ownership we can have – I am not really talking about the literal ownership of objects. As for do I find it hard to distinguish myself from the work? When I am in the flow or process of making it – there is no separation between self and work – it’s literally one. Once that stops – well it’s a cultural object – and is that me? – not in a traditional definition of a ‘me’ its not.

What is your most favorite text and why?
Please quote it for us and explain why you favor it.
I love a text by James Baldwin called ‘the creative process’ – this is not the whole of it but to quote a little – “A society must assume that it is stable, but the artist must know, and he must let us know, that there is nothing stable under heaven.” It’s fierce and alive and I often love that energy of Wake Up – were not here long so live fully. The most I can find it online are here.

What is your favorite song at the moment?
I found a 10 hour loop of the Skype ringtone on YouTube recently – it’s not a favorite song but that’s the thing I remember actively looking to listening to part of. Beyond that – the soundtrack I follow is mainly whatever is going on in the immediate soundscape – right now that’s a police car in Hackney (London) and a cement mixer. Sorry to be so obuse but I think we miss a lot when we only specify certain things to be listened to or watched – it limits the scope of what can be heard and seen.

Which book touched you the most and what is the story behind it?
There are some books that simply transcend the format of a book – Primo Levi – if this is a man – loss about literature and more about witness – yes it’s about a holocaust – but scarily, and profoundly about humanity and what that means.

You love folk tales, name your favorite.
Oscar Wilde obviously was a great author of many new tales – and Marina Warner as a commentator on them.

Which creature would you be in which fairy tale and in what ways do you identify with the mythical creature of your choice?
Wood pigeon – they never make it into a story, totally irrelevant and if they do often end up in pies.

Which is your most precious verse from what poem?
I love a text by James Baldwin called ‘the creative process’ – this is not the whole of it but to quote a little – “A society must assume that it is stable, but the artist must know, and he must let us know, that there is nothing stable under heaven.” It’s fierce and alive and I often love that energy of Wake Up – were not here long so live fully. The most I can find it online are here.

What advice would you give to aspiring creatives out there?
Consumption in our culture far outweighs the creation of it – so… don’t read about it - write about it. Don’t buy it – make it. And try and avoid getting others stuck in the trap of consumption. Always stay on the side of inspiration and creation – both in yourself and others. A sense of humor is a must.!

What do you think is the best way to close this interview and say goodbye?
[ a space followed by a full stop].

Text by Loukas Karnis
http://www.typorn.org/
Lou Timby profiles artist Sam Winston, whose participatory artwork Birthday forms part of this month's Mayfest

**You studied design and visual communication at University of the Arts, what sparked your transition to fine art?**

The transition from the applied arts to the fine arts was simply because of the subject matter that I wanted to tackle as a designer. Often the questions I was exploring using design approaches were incredibly broad – exploring themes around language and how we construct meaning – which meant they became increasingly hard to be termed design in a traditional sense.

That plus as I would often present an exploration of a question rather than a definitive solution – which again makes the work less likely to fit a traditional design definition.

Also, over time, I came to trust the more expressive but perhaps more abstract forms of poetry and painting - somehow in their lack of specificity I found something honest.

**Your work encompasses sculpture, drawings and art books, which medium do you prefer?**

I would see most mediums as a voice by which to communicate with an audience – so the choice of a medium depends on who I want to speak to. It sometimes really as obvious as librarians prefer books and gallerists prefer pictures.

As for my preference? Generally people tend to have interesting observations and views about the mediums they like – and I am very sympathetic to that. So I would say whoever is in my world at that time forms a big part of my preference.

**How do you decide which medium to use when exploring and conveying a concept?**

When I am in the studio it's often a case of achieving a balance between many conflicting disciplines. A day can contain work on the computer, some craft element – say drawing - and also a meeting. All of these have a certain resonance – say the meeting is focused on ideas, the drawing quite physical and the computer visually engaging.

My choices emerge with me trying to achieve a balance between them.

Knowing when to extend the discipline and persevere or the opposite – to let go of it and leave it alone is the hardest part of a day. I am often trying to find new ways in which to listen out for these shifts.

**How did you get involved with Mayfest?**

Rather simply because Matthew the organiser and founder of Mayfest came across a previous project at the Southbank Centre in London and thought elements of that would be very relevant to the program he was curating. After a few conversations about relevance and context we both decided I could add something to the festival.

**And the Cultural Programme for the 4th International Conference on Public Health and Palliative Care?**

This again was through Matthew. I am always interested in working with organisations such as these - because the material they cover is in the midst of our lives yet we often never have either the time, or the technical knowledge to follow what they are covering. Yet the subject matter is of vital importance to us.

In this case it's a conference concerned with how our culture deals with death and dying and like it or not this subject will impact on us massively in our lives. I sometimes see the role of an artist is to translate some of the more abstract or difficult subjects into new forms and introduce it to new audiences.

**Your approach to language is meticulous and unique, breaking it down into form as well as content. Has language always informed your work prior to your creation of art books and images?**

My interest in typography came from an interest in language; the interest in language came from an interest in how to structure thoughts and the interest in how we structure thought came from growing up Dyslexic.

Which again leads to a wider point about where to find inspiration. I would say that within every problem or conflict there is a set of questions that are in need of exploration. So in this case the alternative understanding of words / letterforms (called dyslexic leads to a series of explorations (now called an artist practice) around language.

For me a problem and its creative investigation are the backbone of what I do. I would even go so far to say that a problem, well phrased as a question, is the most powerful muse.

With Birth-day audience participation is a key part of the work, has this been in your practice before?

At a certain point nearly all art has to begin to have a relationship with an audience – even if it's only an audience of one (yourself).

I began to really become aware of participation with a project called Orphan – where I was cutting up old books to spell a new story. Even on that scale I realised whatever is around us – whatever we cultivate – impacts on what is created.

So participation is a bit like a cook checking out her ingredients before making a dish – sometimes you spend a long time going to markets and finding exactly the right ingredients – this would be a creative considering every element before compiling a work.

Other times you just pull open the fridge door and go with whatever's in – and this would be more akin to a large public participatory project – you just don't know what will walk through the door and that's what makes the work interesting.

Birthday was the first time I had opened the door to an audience.

What is it that inspired you to approach these colossal themes of Birth and Death?

I am not sure I had a choice in the matter when it comes to the themes of life and death.

I guess from the moment you become aware of your self, from that point on the narrative of life arises and part of that narrative also involves the end of that life.

So for me the exploration of these themes in art is a very natural response to coming into the world. As a metaphor I would say - once I got on the bus I found it very hard not to look out the window and wonder where it goes... and when I'll get off.

http://www.bristol247.com/
Through his explorations of language, Sam Winston creates sculptures, drawings and books that question our understanding of words, both as carriers of messages and as information itself.

Are there any processes you have developed to help kick-start the idea generation process?

I’d say for me idea generation is a lot more evolutionary than it is ‘flash of lightning’. I often watch things grow. I have a stream of thoughts, some of those thoughts are creative and if one reoccurs over a month or so I will give it more focused attention by realizing it, whether that’s a drawing, design or a piece of writing. I don’t know why certain themes come back more than others, but I am usually caught on language and how we use it, both visually and in terms of how it’s structured. Recurrence is where a good idea comes from; if it appears three or four times, I then have to act on it.

How do your best ideas occur?

I don’t keep a notebook, diary or any formal way of recording ideas. I leave enough room in the day for intuition or the unconscious to work. I meditate in the morning, as that’s a more direct way of looking at the mind than indirect ways, like daydreaming. I will consciously walk into the studio and not think about ideas – my friend has a phrase that I like which is, ‘keep it breezy’. I can be a little heavy handed, so I try to put a lightness of touch into how I think about things. I will not directly say, ‘this is the concept time,’ I will just ignore it. By ignoring it, things will appear in their own time. I think that is good, as a mode of operation.

Because of the nature of my artwork, I can spend five or six years on a project, and by the time I have finished it I will pretty much know what is happening in the next project, and the one after that.

When do you know you have the ‘golden idea’?

I think one of the most integral parts to any idea generation process is being able to listen. Rather than trying to tell people what the idea is, try presenting the concept and listen to what is being said to you. It’s a balance between listening, but not doing exactly what you are told – listening in a wise way, having discriminating awareness. You don’t get to a golden idea; what you get is a more evolved idea, and if you have that mentality it will protect you from preciousness.

Preciousness comes from this idea that there is something that is genius, or there is something that is great. The moment you put that pressure on yourself, you’re setting yourself up for a fall because ideas are never going to reach your aspirations of what a good idea is.
My biggest question is, how long does each piece take to complete? Say, how long did it take to sculpt the Folded Dictionary piece?

A work like Folded Dictionary took a couple of months of time. Each project varies, as it is also due to the amount of energy you have available to spend. With Romeo & Juliet – where I was cutting out every letter of Shakespeare’s play – towards the end it becomes a real discipline to keep up enthusiasm.

But that is part of the process of making a work – I know few people that want to go to that extreme - I guess I go there because a lot of people can’t be bothered. I am interested in learning about things in places where people don’t go.

Because of the repetitious nature, that eventually becomes texture (ha! that’s appropriate!) in your work, I see an almost meditative aspect as well. Almost bordering the Zen meditation of Buddhist monks. Does this factor into your work? Do you seek to convey that inner-contemplative aspect to your audience?

About five years after graduating I started a mediation practice. Or maybe I didn’t start it but rather the work quietly led me to that place. On good days my waking life / artwork and head space are all pretty much harmonious. That doesn't mean all is calm– it is just that I have a perspective on the day that over time has become invaluable. I have created more works that ask me to be very present in the making of them. I guess it's an attempt to stay present in my day.

Also I hope an audience can see I have put time into a work and that encourages them to also engage with it beyond the superficial element of just looking. I really care about the themes that I try to address in the work and that is something I am at pains to communicate.

What are your inspirations? Judging by the diverse range of themes in your work, I’m curious to know where you derive your ideas from.

The most basic theme in my work is language – how we structure this system and how it impacts on our worldview. I try and choose distinctive styles of literature – dictionaries, encyclopaedias, myth/fairytale. These are all vessels for carrying specific messages – whether moral, social or political. And by cutting them up – sometimes literally – you gain a portrait to the thinking behind them. That's the main premise for my practice.

http://gcolon.co.kr/