



Stella Haycock, mouth open, mouth closed (installation documentation), 2024. Screen print on 300gsm BFK Rives, gallery walls, floors and ceiling, dimensions variable. Image: Stella Haycock and Isabelle Cowan. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

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Onespace and the artist would like to thank:

Ruth Cho; Isabelle Cowan; Shannon O'Hara; Alison McKay and Tim Mosely.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Brisbane region, the Turrbal and Jagera peoples.

We acknowledge their continuing connection to the lands, waters, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Directors, John Stafford and Jodie Cox

john@onespace.com.au

jodie@onespace.com.au

Gallery Assistant, Demi Conrad

demi@onespace.com.au

onespacegallery.com.au

4/349 Montague Road, West End QLD 4101 Australia

Tues to Fri: 10am–5pm | Sat: 12pm–4 pm

Stella Haycock (she/they) is a Meanjin-based artist exploring the abstraction and manipulation of alphabetic forms, pulling apart depictions of the written word in contemplation of line, form and space. Interested in letters as arbitrary marks on a page, she uses screen-printing techniques and largescale installations to challenge the form and function of the written word. Haycock questions the conventions of language in its written and spatial forms, seeking to encourage viewers to engage with each form as an entity of individualised movement, gesture, shape and detail.

They completed their BFA (Honours) at the Queensland College of Art in 2023. Haycock's work has been exhibited across various galleries and institutions, including the University of the Sunshine Coast and the Queensland College of the Art, and is included in the collections of the State Library of Queensland and the Griffith University Art Museum.

Artist Statement:

This site-specific installation explores the fluidity and movement of a series of almost-alphabetic forms, and engages the surfaces of the floor, wall & ceiling in an expansion of traditional screen-printing methods. Produced over a week of experimentation and collaborative installation, the work realises a fascination with the movement of the hand and body in the act of writing. Repeating a series of hand drawn, abstracted "letterforms", and eliminating any traces of legibility prompts viewers to experience an alternative interaction with material language.

Partnered with



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Stella Haycock *mouth open, mouth closed*

10 - 25 May 2024



Stella Haycock's contemporary approach to traditional printmaking is undeniably renegade. In their latest body of work, *mouth open, mouth closed*, Haycock continues a profound exploration of alphabetic letterforms through an experimental screen-printing practice, inviting viewers into a realm where fluidity meets form, and tradition intersects with innovation.

In *mouth open, mouth closed*, Haycock has been encouraged to experiment, leveraging the site-specific installation access and embracing new video processes to inform their approach, documenting intimate core movements and repetitive writing actions to spark their inquiry.

The exhibition unfolds as a sensory experience across print and digital mediums. Delicate strokes of black ink cascade across walls, floors, and paper surfaces, transforming the gallery space into a captivating installation that beckons viewers to explore and engage with the artworks on a visceral level.

Alongside the large-scale installation, Haycock's video work *My Original Concerns* documents an intimate macro recording of the artist performing subtle movements in the process of writing. As viewers navigate through the space, they are enveloped by a primal calligraphic language that blurs the boundaries between line, shape, and scale, inviting them to reconsider their relationship with written communication.

By distilling and splicing language forms into their own abstracted shorthand, Haycock reimagines these symbols to create a revitalised viewing of letterforms disengaged from their operation as signs.¹

Central to Haycock's practice is their innovative approach to the screen-printing process, which evolves from confirming a series of drawn marks and forms. Haycock then paint these directly onto a sheet of clear acetate. Retaining the artist's hand, these marks are then mirrored and exposed onto a screen, serving as stencils for repeated experimentation on walls and paper surfaces. This meticulous process not only imbues the artwork with a sense of intimacy and authenticity but also serves as a reflection of the artist's deep engagement with their materials and medium.

Across surfaces, whether page or wall, Haycock eradicates hierarchical structures, foregrounding overlooked marks. Some pages are left empty or bereft of marks, challenging traditional notions of composition, and privileging every surface as part of the experience.

In their exploration of variability over strict uniformity, Haycock repeats selected forms with varying orientations and spacing, creating a sense of movement and dynamism. By embracing textural imperfections and incorporating monoprint techniques into vertical

screen-printing processes, Haycock challenges the conventional uniformity associated with screen-printing, thereby situating their work within the broader discourse of print culture. This engagement takes on added significance in our digital age, as Haycock's work evokes the tactile sensation and materiality inherent in the history of visible written and printed alphabetic forms.²

Through performative gestures, Haycock inserts their own body into the creative process, echoing the expressive movements of traditional penmanship. This hands-on approach—characterised by awkward positioning on floors, walls and ceilings—establishes a direct physical connection with the artwork, inviting viewers to engage with its construction on a visceral level. Despite the seemingly spontaneous composition, Haycock's work reveals itself to be meticulously planned and executed upon closer inspection.

Observing repeated lines underscoring curves and dis- and re-assembled forms, the viewer is given the impossible task of piecing together Haycock's reimagined alphabet.

Some shapes may appear familiar, hinting at conventional understandings of the English alphabet, while others remain enigmatic and elusive. This intentional ambiguity frustrates the viewer's impulse to find coherence, urging them to reconsider their preconceived notions of meaning and representation.³

In recentring a focus on the material nature of the alphabet, Haycock invites viewers to reconsider their relationship with signs, symbols, and signifiers, prompting a re-evaluation of the ways in which we communicate and interpret the world around us.

Print culture has arguably depersonalised and standardised our interaction with visible language, stripping away the human elements of handwriting and gesture that imbue the author's character and personality into their text.⁴ In response, Haycock forges a profound connection with the inherent capabilities of the medium, infusing reproduced and repeated forms with an embodied personalised touch.

Through their restrained minimalism, Haycock creates an immersive experience that invites introspection and contemplation. Carefully orchestrated to evoke a sense of space and depth, Haycock's work encourages viewers to reflect on the complexities of alphabetic forms and the fluidity of meaning inherent in visible language.

Alison McKay

1. Stella Haycock, "a kind of breathing room: exploring pictorial depictions of the English alphabet through printmaking", Honours thesis, 2023, Griffith University.

2. Ieva Marija Reikalaitė, Screen printing – Roots and Meaning in Contemporary Culture (Handle Proxy, 2017), 1.

3. Hanneke Grootenboer, *The Pensive Image: Art as a Form of Thinking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 4.

4. Carlo Ginzberg, "Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method," *History Workshop* no. 9 (1980): 5–36, JSTOR.



Stella Haycock

tongue twister (from anachronistically assembled), 2024
Screen print on 300gsm BFK Rives, 40 x 30cm

2AP + Edition of 6

Image: Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.