

*The Writing's on the Wall: Language and Silence in the Visual Arts*

Curated by Hilton Als

Hill Art Foundation

December 12, 2024–March 29, 2025

Public opening Wednesday, December 11 from 6 p.m.–8 p.m.

The Hill Art Foundation is pleased to present *The Writing's on the Wall: Language and Silence in the Visual Arts*, curated by Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, critic, and curator Hilton Als. The Foundation will host a public opening on Wednesday, December 11 from 6 p.m.–8 p.m. The exhibition will be on view December 12, 2024–March 29, 2025.

This group exhibition presents 20th and 21st-century artists whose work explores the relationships between communication and language. In the curatorial text, Als explains: “for this exhibition, I wanted to show what silence looked like—at least to me—and what words looked like to artists.”

“Writing and erasure have been important sources of inspiration for many of the artists in my family’s collection, including Christopher Wool, Rudolf Stingel, Vija Celmins, and Cy Twombly,” says J. Tomilson Hill, President of the Hill Art Foundation. “Hilton Als has identified a fascinating motif and introduced important loans to illustrate the rich history of these lines of inquiry into the present day.”

In his accompanying essay, *Poetics of Silence*, Als probes the power of visual art to skirt the written or spoken word. The works included convey “the sense we have when language isn’t working,” evoke “EKGs of rhythm followed by silence, or surrounded by it,” reveal “painting as language’s subtext,” illustrate “what we mean to say as opposed to what gets said,” and “find beauty in the tools that one uses to erase words—and then to make new ones.” He reflects on his own entry into the art world as an art history student at Columbia in the 1980s, and his efforts as a writer and curator to create a democratic “language of perception” that transcends traditional connoisseurship.

The Writing’s on the Wall encompasses a range of mediums, from video installation to printed zine. Artists in the exhibition include Ina Archer, Vija Celmins, Sarah Charlesworth, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Ellen Gallagher, Joel Gibb and Paul P., Rachel Harrison, G.B. Jones and Paul P., Jennie C. Jones, Sherrie Levine, Judy Linn, Agnes Martin, Claes Oldenburg, Ronny Quevedo, Umar Rashid, David Salle, Rudolf Stingel, Cy Twombly, Steve Wolfe, and Christopher Wool.