

**Group Text**  
Curated by Beta Epochs

Hunter Saxony III, Ziba Rajabi, Eleanor Foy,  
Natalie Lerner, Hương Ngô, Glen Rubsamen,  
Madeleine Ignon & Alex Lukas

June 10th - July 16th, 2023  
*Opening Reception, Saturday, June 10th, 5–7pm*

**Left Field Gallery**  
1036 Los Osos Valley Rd, Los Osos, CA



Eleanor Foy, *Peanuts/Curtains*, 2022

*Words and images drink the same wine. There is no purity to protect.*  
- Marlene Dumas, 1984

Today we find ourselves inundated with language at every turn. From the barrage of advertising that continues to define our experience under capitalism, to protest signs held aloft in the street and draped from highway overpasses, to the warming buzz of messages from friends perpetually landing in our pockets, we are incessantly reading at a grand and historically unprecedented scale.

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This inundation, then, presents a very real possibility for a contemporary condition of soft focus; glossed eyes doom scrolling without reading, vision blurring text into a mush of formal elements. The line, form, and shape of language collapses as our eyes seek respite, text slipping into indecipherability like a graffiti covered wall. We all feel a little tipsy.

While today's text-based practitioners face the same tension that has bedeviled visual artists for centuries: what is seen, what is read, and in what order, they are also presented with an opportunity to snap language back into sharp focus. *Group Text*, curated by Beta Epochs for Left Field Gallery, investigates the values and aesthetics of current cultural lexicon and visual semantics. The show brings together eight artists, all of whom employ written language as an integral part of their visual lexicon. From reappropriating calligraphic forms, to exploring the ephemerality of the written word and demanding new forms of legibility, artworks in the exhibition propose new avenues for how visual artists engage with text. It's messy work, blurring text and texture, a sense of place with displacement, and extricating and examining text from and within the landscape.

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### Artist Biographies:

**Eleanor Foy** is a multi-disciplinary artist currently based in Athens, Georgia. Raised in the south San Francisco Bay Area, the landscape and mythology of California and the American West continue to inform her work. After studying painting for three years at Pratt Institute in New York, Foy transferred to Kansas City Art Institute to complete her BFA in ceramics. This change in focus was compelled by a desire to work in a medium that spans fine art, craft, and mass-production. Foy has received numerous awards, including the Regina Brown Undergraduate Student Fellowship through the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) and the Warren MacKenzie Advancement Award through the Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Notable exhibitions include the 2022 NCECA Annual, *Belonging*, at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California, and *Trick Pony*, a two-person exhibition with Grace Kennison at the Valley in Taos, New Mexico. She is interested in how vernacular language and objects express cultural values, and seeks to unpack the complicated layers of meaning in seemingly mundane images of Americana. Foy is an MFA candidate at the Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia in Athens.

**Madeleine Eve Ignon** was born in Los Angeles in 1987, and currently lives and works in Santa Barbara. She is a multimedia artist and graphic designer who works in a wide range of painting and collage techniques. Ignon's practice centers on translating graphic design language and history into a painterly and expressive vernacular. Her work is about the combination of text and gesture, text as gesture, and how text works—how it looks, how it reads, and how it expresses itself. Ignon has been awarded residencies at Starry Night Program (Truth or Consequences, New Mexico), Vermont Studio Center (Johnston, VT), and Drop Forge & Tool (Hudson, NY), and has exhibited nationally. She graduated from Connecticut College with a BA in Studio Art and a Certificate in Museum Studies, and received a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate from the Pont-Aven School of Contemporary Art in Brittany, France. She earned her MFA from UC Santa Barbara, where she was the 2019–20 College of Creative Studies Teaching Fellow. She currently teaches art and design at UCSB and Santa Barbara City College.

**Natalie Lerner's** work explores personal words and phrases associated with loss and longing. Letters and partial phrases are woven into domestic imagery, dissolving in flames, or become animated through their relation to other elements. These, and other domestic objects, are thought of as symbols of

continuation, acting as signifiers while thinking about her family lineage; what lost loved ones can imbue in us, and the dreams or wishes passing between people who are here and the deceased. She builds her drawings out of 18th-century ghost stories, horror films, poetry, and texts on suspect women. Lerner was born in 1992 in Florida, and lives and works in New York City. She attended Ringling College, AICAD's NYSRP Independent Study Program, and received an Ellen Battell Stoeckel Fellowship. Lerner's work has been exhibited in the United States and abroad, including exhibitions at Feinkunst Krüger, Hamburg, Germany; Stockton University, Galloway, NJ; Camayuhs, Atlanta GA; Mother Gallery, Beacon, NY; Left Field Gallery, Los Osos, CA; Underground Flower X Pee Pee Gallery, Fremantle, Australia; Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA; and in NYC.

**Alex Lukas** was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and raised in nearby Cambridge. With a wide range of influences, Lukas' practice is focused on the intersections of place and human activity, narrative, history, and invention. His fieldwork, research, and production reframes the monumental and the incidental through intricate publication series, sculptures, drawings, prints, videos, and audio collages. Lukas' work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and is included in the collections of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Kadist Foundation, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Art Library, the New York Public Library, and the Library of the Museum of Modern Art. Lukas has been awarded residencies at The Bemis Center for the Arts, the Ucross Foundation, The Center for Land Use Interpretation, The Fountainhead, and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center's Arts/Industry program, amongst others. He graduated with a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and received an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 2018. Lukas is currently an Assistant Professor of Print and Publication in the Department of Art at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and organizer of CA53776V2.gallery, an experimental exhibition platform on the dashboard of a 2007 Ford Ranger.

**Hương Ngô** works across mediums of printmaking, photography, installation, and performance to understand how the body is shaped by and therefore might resist structures of colonial violence and imperial ideology. Often beginning with primary research materials from national and personal archives, her work turns a lens on the archive itself to understand how knowledge is constructed and histories become erased over time. The images or objects produced may be fleeting, temporal, or even challenge the borders of visibility, as Ngô seeks to intervene into viewer expectations and expose gaps in archival knowledge, giving form to that which is fugitive or rendered invisible. Ngô's artistic practice has been recognized and exhibited at prestigious institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, MCA Chicago, the New Museum in New York, and the Renaissance Society in Chicago, among others. She was awarded the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Grant in Vietnam in 2016 and has been described as "deftly and defiantly decolonial" by New City and "what intersectional feminist art looks like" by the Chicago Tribune. Ngô's achievements also include being twice recipient of the 3Arts Award and being featured in the Prague Biennial in 2005 and Prospect.5 Triennial in 2021.

**Ziba Rajabi** was born Tehran, Iran, in 1988 and received her MFA from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and her BFA from the Sooreh University, Tehran. Her primary practice is focused on painting, drawing, and fabric-based installation. She is the recipient of the Artist 360 Grant, a program sponsored by the Mid-America Arts Alliance. Her work has been included in a number of exhibitions, nationally and internationally, such as Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; AR, CICA Museum; South Korea; Masur Museum; LA; 21C Museum, AR; Araan Gallery, Iran; The II Platform, UK, among many others. She has been an artist in residence at Vermont Studio Center as well as Anderson Ranch Arts Center.

**Glen Rubsamen** was born in Hollywood, California in 1957. He is a visual artist and writer, primarily working with painting and photography. Rubsamen splits his time between Los Angeles, California and Düsseldorf, Germany

A Rhode Island-born, San Francisco-based Ornamental Calligrapher, **Hunter Saxony III** investigates love and loss, mortality, preservation, and the discovery of self. His work is presented with a signature palette of red and black brush strokes paired with a confident mark-making identity. His lifelong penchant for written words can also be seen in a minimalist version of storytelling that invites the viewer to consider just as much as it asks for understanding. Saxony employs shape, form, and text to present a delicate and sometimes visceral look into the human condition. His works have been collected by The Letterform Archive and the Richard Harrison Collection of Calligraphy & Lettering at the San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

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**Beta Epochs** is Madeleine Eve Ignon and Alex Lukas. Embracing hopeful play, raw curiosity, and disheveled cooperation, their cooperative exhibition organizing celebrates vulnerability and messiness as a space of possibility. *Group Text* is their second curatorial collaboration.