

ARTFORUM

Sebastian Black

BALICE HERTLING | PARIS

47 rue Ramponeau

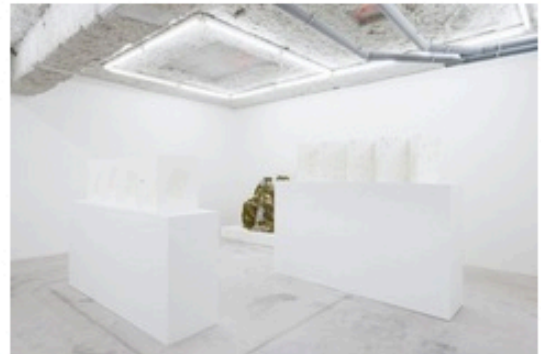
April 23, 2015–May 23, 2015

For his first exhibition in Paris, Sebastian Black produced a small group of works that at first seem randomly connected. In opposing corners stand two of the artist's embankment sculptures, which pay homage to bureaucratic design, and between them is a so-called period piece, featuring printed punctuation and letters. Considered together, however, the group conveys Black's ability to transform, as he describes it, "meaningless stuff and stuffless meaning" into something jarring and impossible to ignore.

The exhibition's title references Black's view of these works as "shapes," suggesting an exclusively formal interest. In fact, the presentation of these ubiquitous symbols in a new context—such as a desk based on the design of a bank's check deposit kiosk set on a hillside as if it were a modernist building—reveals that their shapes cannot be divorced entirely from their associated meaning.

His sculptures depend on the moment at which the viewer becomes aware of their source materials.

This emphasis on transitive meaning is especially clear in *Period Piece Simple Sequence Sculpture (2 parts)*, 2015, made up of two printed, accordion-style paper screens. Black periods and white letters are printed in intaglio and each viewable from opposite sides on the folded sheet. The work is fully comprehensible only from multiple perspectives. Its spare aesthetic—part sculpture and part printmaking—belies a technical complexity; the piece was produced in collaboration with a master printer using a combination of techniques. Displayed on a pedestal at eye level, the piece physically invites consideration of the pause suggested by its punctuation and ascribes meaning to the otherwise banal.



Sebastian Black, *Period Piece Simple Sequence Sculpture (2 parts)*, 2015, aquatint, painted MDF, and aluminum, 70 x 172 x 20".

—Britany Salisbury