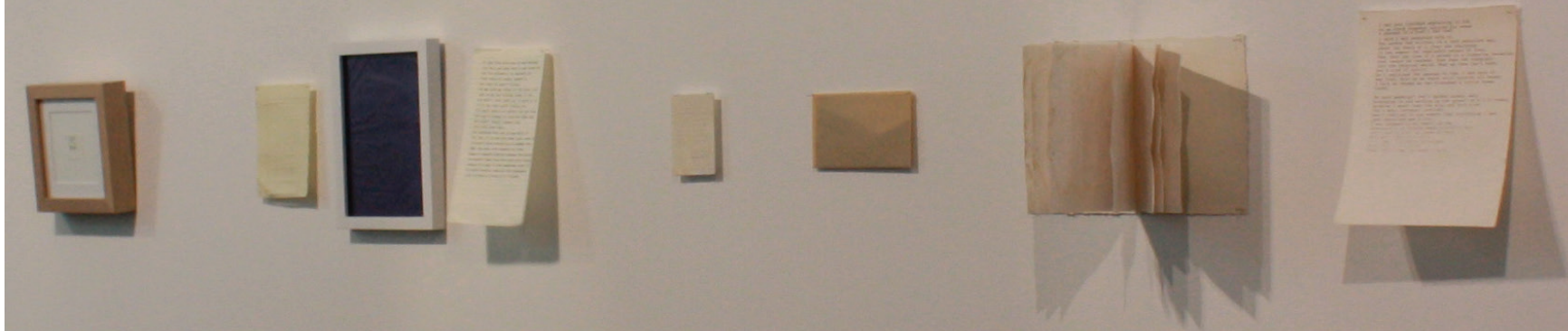


an  
undisclosed  
motive



Levitation: Tor MacLean and Priscilla Beck

"Sometimes I see it then paint it. Other times I paint it and then see it.  
Both are impure situations and I prefer neither"

Jasper Johns, Statement 1959

"Just a suggestion of nature gives weight  
Light and heavy  
Like a feather  
You get light enough and you levitate"

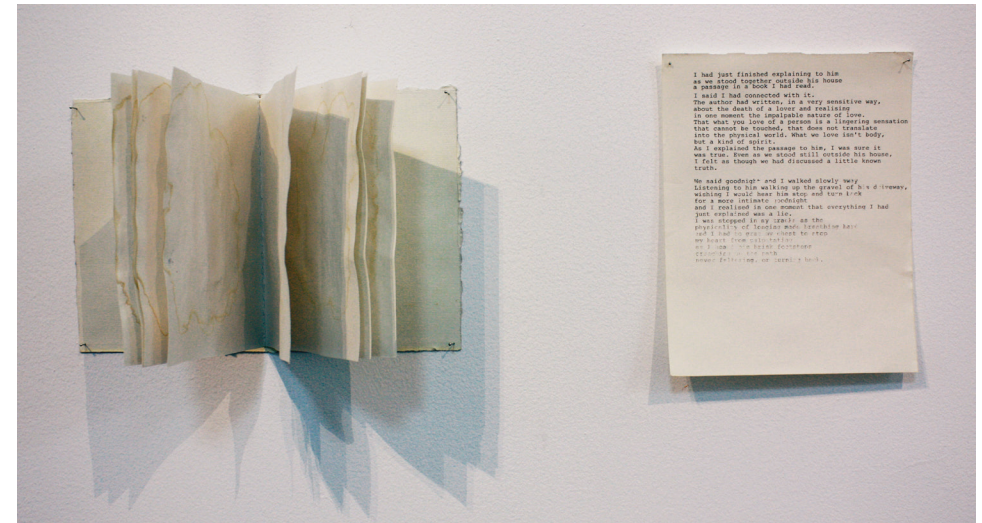
Agnes Martin The Untroubled Mind 1972

In his Juillard lecture of 1952 John Cage talked about the response of Dr Suzuki to questioning about the difference between the statement "men are men" and "mountains are mountains" before and after studying Zen, with the resulting elicited response being: "the same, only somewhat as if you had your feet a little off the ground". The works of Tor MacLean and Priscilla Beck manifest a world of shadows, palimpsests, echoes, fleeting glimpses and the sense of time, space and recollection that is a reflection to some degree of the texts of Henri Bergson's Matter and Memory and Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan. Their respective processes necessarily are individual, but bear witness to shared concerns of a quiet, restrained and contemplative working process, and maybe even the chance to levitate.

In a recent review in The Spectator (26.1. 2013), of Giorgio Morandi's exhibition of etchings and watercolours at the Estorick collection in London, the critic Andrew Lambirth talked about the understatement of the artist as "simplification that is endlessly deceptive". The same could apply to MacLean and Beck in terms of the elements of reduction that are in play that offer a resonance that can be experienced through prolonged engagement by the viewer. Both artists offer moments of clarity through text and image, only for them both to retreat into a more private reverie by, for instance, covering an image with transparent paper or allowing a typed text to stutter into repetition and invisibility.

The sense of poetry, at times metaphorical and also at times literal, the pursuit of impure situations, in the work of both artists, offers the possibility of profound statement now and in the future.

Ian Friend  
Brisbane 2013



from left: Tor Maclean, White Pill, 2012; Priscilla Beck, Palpable, 2012

notes:

This show was our last chance to have an exhibition together before we each leave Brisbane.

Tor to Tasmania

Priscilla to Melbourne.

For years we've been planning to make an artist book together, and we see this show as the first draft. Reading from left to right around the space, our works generate a dialogue with one another, alternating between small, intimate poems, works on paper, photographs and drawings. There is no discernable theme in the works, just a book you may walk through.

We dedicate this first draft to Ian and Robyn for their support and friendship.

Tor and Priscilla  
(formerly) Brisbane 2013