

## UNCERTAIN ALPHABET

Now more than ever before, humanity is equipped with the tools to connect across an increasingly small world, beyond physical and ideological borders. Friends and loved ones, near and far, known and as yet unrealized, are only a few clicks away, their histories lying in wait, begging to be discovered. Given the wealth of information at our fingertips, we might question our own role in this dynamic--what is it that we are willing to offer of ourselves in order to know an 'other'?

The answer, it seems, is not very much at all. Looking for love? Swipe right. Agree with a statement or support a cause? Thumbs up. Celebrating a friend's accomplishment? That'll be one swift double-tap. Insert smiley face, insert heart, repeat. Scrolling through life from the comfort of our own anywhere, communication has become more of a convenient pastime than an active emotional investment--a far cry from those earliest pictographs and gestures, so necessarily replete with signification as woman and man plunged into a wholly unfamiliar world. Today's return to pictographic symbols can certainly feel like progress, undeniably enabling us to react with greater frequency on any number of "social" outlets during our limited free time; but what can be said for the quality of our engagement? Has the value of our signs become diluted by their own accessibility? Inundated by options that require less and less of our own active participation, have we become rooted in place, our complacency masked by the illusion of connectivity?

Yorgos Giotsas not only meets us in this state of suspension but guides us through it, mapping out a world that is seemingly-familiar, but not quite so; seemingly-knowable, but somehow just out of reach - a metropolis of pure dualism whose topography has been cut, pasted, painted, and drawn from equal parts revelation and obscurity. Layer upon delicate layer of Giotsas' intentionally-imprecise geometries rise out of (or, alternatively, recede into) its foundation, forming an infrastructure whose tenuous existence is predicated on a balance of opposing tensions. Beckoned by dots, dashes, grids, and glyphs whose meanings we long to unlock, we attempt to take a step forward, only to find ourselves unable to proceed; if only we had the key, or could remember where we left it.

How are we to navigate this plane of active stasis? Perhaps, the artist suggests, the most promising route ahead does not lie before us after all, but behind, its origin accessible through the palimpsest of a collective human experience that has, time and again, necessitated a return to basics. Peering through rice paper veils to a moment just within reach, we allow



Giotsas' nascent alphabet to wash over us, saturated with the weight of humanity's first words -- a whispered reminder of some half-remembered innocence. It is in this state of innocence--not a beginning *ex nihilo*, but a *tabula rasa* firmly planted in the present moment--that we find the key.

Cy Twombly once observed of his own work: "My line is childlike but not childish. It is very difficult to fake...to get that quality you need to project yourself into the child's line. It has to be felt".\* This certainly resonates with Yorgos Giotsas, whose careful markings channel a pure willingness to know. Although *Uncertain Alphabet* represents a formal departure for the artist, who, until recently, has worked primarily in sculpture and mixed media on canvas, this shift to paper is permeated by the same tactile honesty evident throughout his oeuvre, seemingly regardless of medium. Not only is Giotsas aware of our innate desires for connection and meaning-making, but he prioritizes them, leading by example as he invests in each piece the same openness and integrity that he asks of his audience; an unspoken dialogue ignited, full of opportunity, by the uncertainty of a new beginning.

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\* C. Twombly, qtd. in N. Del Roscio et al., *The Essential Cy Twombly*, Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 2014.