

Alexander May "HOLO" exhibition in collaboration with pet Jess Arndt at LAXArt, Los Angeles - purple ART



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[Alexander May](#)'s recent collaborative performance and installation at [LAXArt](#) uses the Roman alphabet and resulting linguistic codes as a catalyst to explore material predicament and process. May's work has consistently revolved around his frustration with the written word – its codification and structural parameters – and his practice is an attempt to reconcile his disconnect.

The nucleus of his installation, *Alfabetik Organ* or communication office, is a physical diagram (comprised of speakers, amps, cylinders and cords) that maps the structural layers within language via human activation. This interactive sounds sculpture transforms the alphabet into an auditory exercise where the twenty-six letters correspond to unmarked pedals that are paired with unique tones. As the audience intuitively plays the glass harp by pressing their knees, palms, or feet into the pedals, they compose a live feed of alphabetic content.

Writers, visual artists and musician friends of May will play the organ – along with two performances by the artist himself – and generate new phonic linguistic scripts. Writer Jess Arndt will intervene composing texts from the raw sequences generated by the performers. These texts initiate an open channel for communication/miscommunication, hearing/mishearing, spelling/un-spelling, ultimately these phonic linguistic scripts are installed alongside Arndt's composed, abstracted texts.

Linking May's installation with his primary sculptural and painting practice, the *Alfabetik Organ* installation is surrounded by a series of paintings and cast sculptures. Alkyd resin aluminum paint is applied to rubber panels using additive techniques, that references the layering of language as you build letters into worlds, into sentences and paragraphs that are governed by the same structural parameters explored in his sound piece. Building on the paintings, stacked sculptures are iron castes of discarded painting panels he layered vertically prior to casting them and then stacking the final metallic sculptures one on top of another. These pillars circle back to the codification of language and the written word encompassed in the entire installation.

Alexander May was born in 1983 in Connecticut. He earned an MFA in Sculpture from Bard College and a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He currently lives and works in New York and is represented by [Balice Hertling](#) in Paris.

Text and photos by Cecelia Stucker