

Artist Statement – Steve Woodbury QWERTY Text Scapes

The basis of text is the line ... It's all in the line

Calligraphy is an art-form with a duality. It can be thought of in two ways: as information transfer and unique artefact in its own right. The QWERTY TEXT-SCAPE project seeks to link calligraphic traditions from both Eastern and Western Art to find new ways of exploring this dual function. They extend the artist's interest in language and perception, the written word and memory, experience and understanding.

As with any language, the meaning of the marks are obvious...when you understand them. TEXT-SCAPES create meaning within the abstracted and at first glance, 'meaningless' gestural line. Each surface is a residue of the progressive build up and removal of layers of painted text, resulting in a hieroglyphic-like textured surface. The texting gesture within these layers is derived from a line, which traces the formation of words on a QWERTY keyboard. Just as a hand or finger moves through sequential points of keys on a keyboard, the line in each painting moves sequentially through those points projected onto the canvas. The gestural line is painted, leaving a trace of the literal meaning that can be discovered through referencing the QWERTY keyboard.

These paintings combine the calligraphic gestural line and the essence of subject through incorporating a modern QWERTY information transfer technique that is gesturally marked with ancient and modern materials. Both aspects of ancient calligraphic traditions are reinvigorated for a contemporary audience. The polarities of text based 'understanding' and the intuitive emotional 'feeling' of gestural abstraction opens a liminal state to be 'experienced' and enjoyed.