

Editors' Introduction

This issue of *SEQUITUR* brings to readers work on multiple, multifaceted, and overlapping concepts of "text/ure." Through a focus on the element of texture itself as a material quality of surface, we hope to deliberately emphasize haptic experience in the contents of this issue, rather than limiting exploration to the optic realm, so frequently privileged in art-historical discourse. Further, by highlighting textual elements of the works examined in this issue, which some of our authors have chosen to treat with semiotic methodology enjoying revived popularity in scholarship of the digital age, this issue acknowledges the textured encounters between these works, their makers, and their viewers.

Our feature essay, by **Anni Pullagura**, delights in the possibilities of such material and semiotic convergences. She approaches the haptic qualities and aesthetic tensions "embodied" by the spectral, sculptural works of contemporary artist Kevin Beasley, who uses aural feedback networks to give "voice" to his resin-drenched figures.

Julia Wilson's visual essay explores a related and twofold form of aesthetic strain. She does this by first remixing photographic images with fractured text, then, by capturing the digital product with a large-format camera. This method calls attention to the existence of the computer screen as both container and medium, in turn pushing against the boundaries of how viewers perceive both surface texture as well as the relationship between text and image as it unfolds across that surface.

The two research spotlights in this issue examine the relationships between materiality, function, and meaning while dealing with issues of the history of race in America in some capacity. **Mariah Gruner's** work on an early-nineteenth-century cradle quilt demonstrates how the "soft politics" of white American women abolitionists manifested themselves within and beyond the world of needlework. **Kate Sunderlin's** field report from the studio of Edward V. Valentine, a Richmond-based sculptor who held some troubling views on racial equality, explores the ways in which a group of plaster sculptures of African Americans entered into dialogue with other plaster works present in the studio where they were displayed.

Althea Ruoppo's interview with Mitra Abbaspour and Calvin Brown, co-curators of *Frank Stella Unbound: Literature and Printmaking*, reveals that the artist's graphic oeuvre used and interpreted narratives through abstract forms. Here, we learn how the relationship between text and image is pushed to encompass not just a response to, but an alternative expression of those literary forms after which Stella named his print series.

Both of the exhibition reviews, **Sasha Goldman's** on *Under a Dismal Boston Skyline* and **Alex Yen's** on *Animal-Shaped Vessels from the Ancient World*, round out our issue by reporting on the ways in which curators are demonstrating the textual, social-historical, and material connections that exist within and among groups of historic works

Overall, the contents of this issue intends to leave the reader with a richer understanding of how the element of texture can be conceptualized in a way that enriches and complicates our understanding of a given work or group of works in a way that reaches far beyond mere surface.

-Ali Terndrup