

# Macushla Robinson / 'Oscilloscope'

## unmarked gallery / February 2008

'Oscilloscope' is a solo exhibition of drawings by the emerging artist Macushla Robinson. These drawings explore the psychometric qualities of the handwritten word, using burning as the primary mark-making technique. The concerns of the works in this exhibition have developed over the course of the artist's study, beginning at the age of 15, when she left highschool to undertake visual arts training at TAFE, followed by a major in Printmaking and Drawing at the ANU Canberra School of Art (concurrently studying philosophy and art theory). The conceptual preoccupations of the works in 'Oscilloscope' stem from the artist's experiences whilst on a student exchange in the Czech Republic. The language barrier led her to consider the expressive and gestural qualities of written language, and its nuanced relationship to physicality. This interest in the gestural meaning of text was furthered by the experience of corresponding with a friend who was close to death, whose handwritten letters are the most intimate record of her physical existence. The handwriting in these letters oscillates between clarity and illegibility. The marks on the page transcend their signified meaning; gesturally communicating something other than that said by the words.

The artist's exploration of the written word has employed burning and smoke-blackening as a form of mark-making. This method was first conceived as a political gesture, conjuring up the notion of book burning. However, in the broader context of the artist's work, it became a method of making marks that could also engulf the drawing in flames and destroy it. This tension between the tangible mark and the destroyed work is crucial to the exhibition in question. An oscilloscope maps sounds. These drawings are silent. However, they map the experiential soundscapes of the human body: rhythms like heartbeat and breath, the body's interior music. These rhythms are contained within the gesture of handwriting. Such scripts function like an oscilloscope, to measure the emotional life of the human body.

'Oscilloscope' opens 6:00pm, 13th February at an unmarked gallery in Woollahra.