

anthem

NO. 24
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006



SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

US \$5.95 / CAN \$8.95 / 7 EUROS
WWW.ANTHEM-MAGAZINE.COM



2 4 >

SPEAK EASY

BOTH ON THE SURFACE AND BELOW, THE ART OF **TAUBA AUERBACH** HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

DUSTIN A. BEATTY: TEXT
TAUBA AUERBACH: IMAGES

Can you give us a brief description as to how you got involved making art?

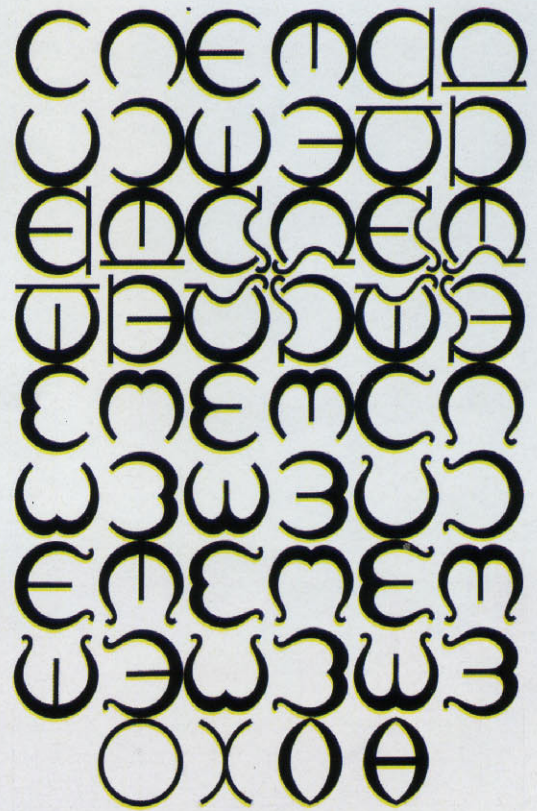
I'd always made art as a kid. A lot of my earliest memories are of drawing. Because I'm an only child, there was a lot of solitary playtime to fill growing up, so I'd make up weird little projects for myself. I would tie-dye all the paper towels in the house with food coloring, or make fake business cards. My parents were really supportive of anything creative, so I just kept going and never stopped.

What are the major themes explored in your work?

Right now all of my work is somehow oriented around language, how language works and doesn't work or keeps us away from certain ideas and leads us to others. It is also often about the form that languages take and the symbols we use to encode our ideas.

Tell us more about the homeless project you worked on in San Francisco.

For a while when I was working as a sign painter, I'd spend some of my free time remaking signs for people who normally hold them on the street. It was just a way for me to do something for someone that was a little bit more personal than just giving them a dollar or passing the same person everyday and not even acknowledging them. The people who took me up on my offer told me what they wanted to sign to be like, and I'd sit there and make it for them while we talked. On one of the first



ALEXANDER MELVILLE BELL'S VISIBLE SPEECH (CONSONANTS), GOUACHE ON PAPER, 38"X50"2006

corner it said \$1, \$5, KFC. When I saw him a few weeks later I asked him if the sign had made a difference. He said that he wasn't making any more money, but he had gotten a ton of KFC.

What major accolades have you received in your career?

Having a career.

What reaction do you hope to elicit in someone viewing your work?

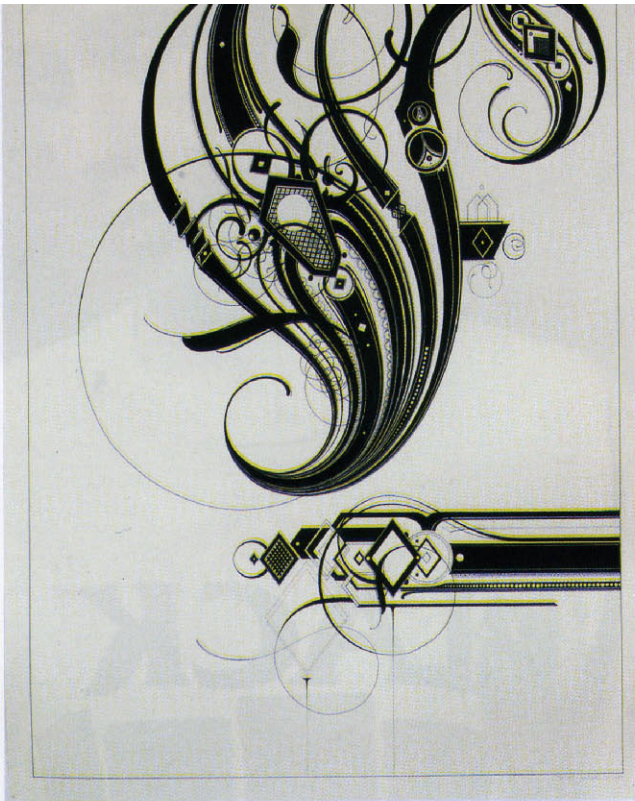
Confusion and then clarity—and then confusion again. I think the ideas behind the work are not right on the surface and you have to spend a little time with it to get at the underlying concepts and recognize the patterns. Hopefully the pieces are visually stimulating enough to draw people in and cultivate curiosity in the viewer. I guess I just want people to contemplate how communication happens and how complicated it is.

Is there any sort of peer group you identify with?

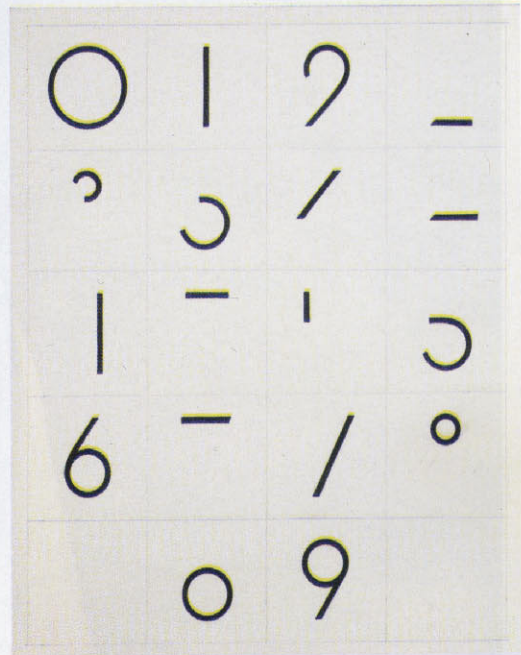
I have so many talented friends making art and music right now—it is really inspiring. We're all kind of doing our own things artistically, which is really ideal. I don't feel like I am part of a style or a trend in art right now. In the end though I think I identify with anyone who is trying to make positive things happen for themselves and others, whatever form that takes.

What hopes do you have for the future of your career?

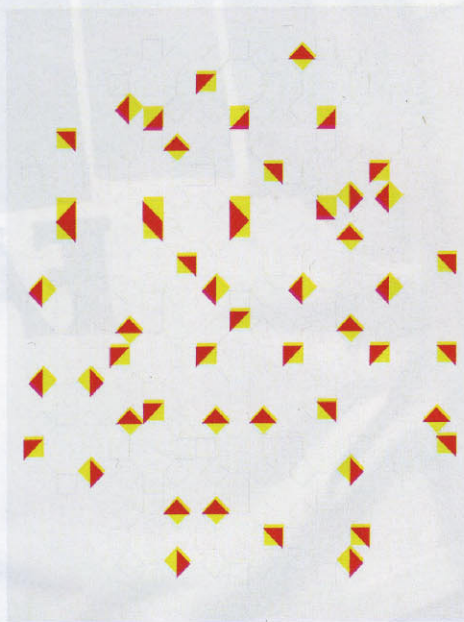
Any thinking I do about the future of my career is totally trumped by the thinking I do about the future in general. I wonder more about the future of oil and corn and cows than I do about my career. Even though I'm appreciative of all the good fortune I've had, it's difficult for me to be totally carefree and enjoy things going well in my life and in my little pursuits when there are bigger things going wrong, like there being a war or people just destroying the environment. I am a very positive, hopeful person, and that is really being tested right now. ■



E, INK ON PAPER, 38"x50", 2005



COMPONENTS, NUMBERS, INK ON PAPER ON PANEL, 2006



SEMAPHORE ALPHABET 1, ACRYLIC AND PENCIL ON PANEL, 2006



V, INK ON PAPER, 38"x50", 2005

"ANY THINKING I DO ABOUT THE FUTURE OF MY CAREER IS TOTALLY TRUMPED BY THE THINKING I DO ABOUT THE FUTURE IN GENERAL. I WONDER MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OIL AND CORN AND COWS THAN I DO ABOUT MY CAREER."