

Markús Þór Andrésson

ON THE WORK OF HLYNUR HALLSSON

Markús Þór Andrésson is a curator based in Reykjavík, and Chief Curator at the Reykjavík Art Museum. He writes about Hlynur Hallsson's text based work.

Language is the wall between us. It bricks us up on one side, leaving the rest of the world on the other. The arbitrary relationship between what we think and feel and the words we choose to express it, leaves us roaming around a semantic labyrinth. It is substantial enough to enclose seven and a half billion individuals whose paths never seem to cross. We can only just hear each other murmuring on the other side of these endless walls. Outside the maze are all the non-human animals chirping, squeaking, barking, growling and roaring in incoherent, phonemic union. Inside, someone is giving these walls a taste of their own medicine, with words serving exclusively as raw material for his practice. Working expeditiously, he leaves words and sentences behind in different bright colours and separate languages, conflating perception and meaning. Should anyone stumble across these writings, they are left with an invitation to do two things, understand and/or penetrate. One will bring you possible meaning, leaving you—after a moment of contemplation—to continue your aimless roam along the walls. The other, however, may allow you to see language as architecture, syntax as sculpture and words as clay. The relationship between language and spatial cognition unravels and, brick by brick, you may deconstruct a hole in the wall big enough for you to comprehend the Om – giving rise to every word used in all languages. From the rubble you can build novel spatial representations; tunnels, stairs, bridges or whatever may facilitate harmony beyond the walls.