

## Mike Schertzer

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La Petite Lumière (Paris); 2015

Photo by Olivier Renault



Originally from Canada, Mike Schertzer is an artist, a writer, and a scientist based in Paris, France. He has published numerous books of poetry, experimental writing, as well as an ongoing 30 year project of a personal journal in dictionary format. As a visual artist he has exhibited his unique collages on glass in Canada and France. His literary and artistic activity is accompanied by his scientific pursuits, specifically as a researcher at the Institut Curie in Paris.

His artistic practice also includes performances and literary interventions in public spaces in Canada and Europe. Such performances aim to expose our incessant confrontation with the *ephemeral*, and to manifest the sentiment that all our efforts, often futile, sometimes heroic, seek to resist effacement by finding refuge in significance.



**Une Déclaration;** *Rencontres Philosophiques.*  
Langres, France. 2012



## ***Some words on my activity as a writer,***

Fundamentally, I am a poet. That is to say, I am a reader. Whenever I read something I enjoy I have the desire to participate in the same conversation. I don't want to control the conversation, I only wish to sit at the same table and listen... and of course, say what I wish to say. During the last 30 years I have published books of poetry, microfiction, and experimental writing. However, the work that is central to my literary activity, and one that has occupied me for over 25 years, is my *Personal Dictionary*. This work is a collection of thoughts and ideas and citations organized into a dictionary format. Moreover, as nothing has been edited or removed this work is a faithful record of thinking over the course of an entire lifetime... and as such it is a work unique in English literature. Even though it is a dictionary its purpose is not to define but to record the process of thinking, to trace the progress and the regress, of thinking. If there is such a thing as sincerity in thinking, in living, it must reside in the contradictions that thinking, that living, engenders. Thought is movement, an activity, or it is nothing.

## ***Some words on my work as a scientist,***

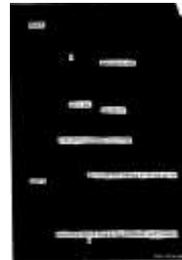
It is thanks to my work as a scientist that I have been able to re-locate to France. I am currently a researcher at the Institut Curie in Paris. My specialty is molecular and cellular biology. During my time working at the BC Cancer Agency in Vancouver I discovered a gene that is implicated in aging, cancer, and other illnesses such as anemia. I am continuing this project in France, and after over a decade of work my results have elucidated unforeseen functions of this gene and have furthered our understanding of not only pathological, but normal cellular function.





## Installation / Performance / Interventions

[poetryisdisaster.com/Essais.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Essais.html)  
[poetryisdisaster.com/Diderot.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Diderot.html)  
[poetryisdisaster.com/Op.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Op.htm)



## Artist Books

[poetryisdisaster.com/Neg.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Neg.htm)



## Writing

[poetryisdisaster.com/Works.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Works.htm)



## Sublimage (*collage on glass*)

[poetryisdisaster.com/Sub.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Sub.htm)



# Installation / Performance

## 2008- 2019

- Devant la loi; Les Marches (deux textes de Franz Kafka, Paris 2019)*
- Confluence (Epitipou 19, Livadia, Andros, Greece)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Confluences.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Confluences.html)
- L'inexprimable (Festival d'art de l'Estran 2018)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Kafka.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Kafka.html)
- Les Villes Invisibles (Nuit Blanche, Brussels 2015)* [poetryisdisaster.com/NBX15.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/NBX15.html)  
(video) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmilUO6vM-A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmilUO6vM-A)
- Les Essais (2014 – present)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Essais.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Essais.html)
- (Philosopher, c'est apprendre à mourir,*  
*InSitu 1.2 Arles, 2017)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Philosopher.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Philosopher.html)
- (Sur les Exercices, Le Guildo 2016)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Exercices.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Exercices.html)  
(video) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVnu3zv2ciUv](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVnu3zv2ciUv)
- (De la gloire, Biarritz 2015)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Gloire.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Gloire.html)
- (De la Solitude, Nuit Blanche, Paris 2014)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Solitude.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Solitude.html)
- Langres Diderot (2013)* [poetryisdisaster.com/Diderot.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Diderot.html)
- Rencontres Philosophiques (2012)* [poetryisdisaster.com/declaration.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/declaration.html)

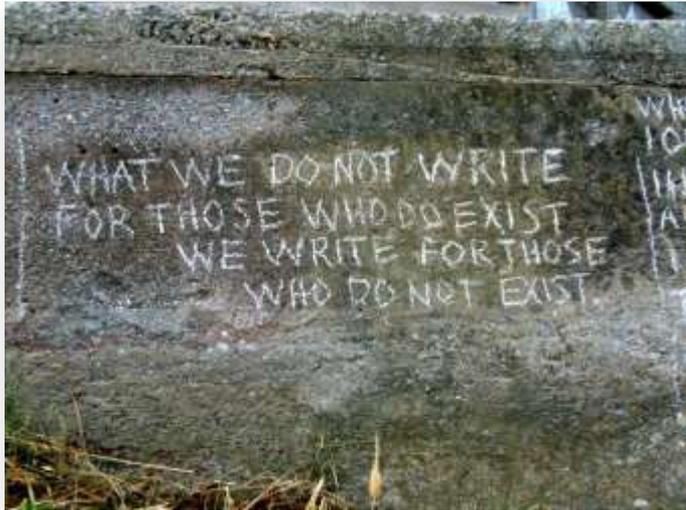


***Confluence (an imagined conversation with Pablo Neruda)***  
*texts by Pablo Neruda and Mike Schertzer in white chalk*

## ***Epitopou 19***

July 1st - August 28th, 2019  
*residence (July 1st -8th)*  
Livadia (Andros), Greece





The title of this work is *Confluence*.

Confluence means flowing together. Think of two rivers merging, intermingling.

Fluent means the ability to express oneself clearly.

Confluence... Speaking together. A conversation.

I have never been to Andros, nor to Greece. As a foreigner I have arrived on your shore. We speak different languages... but, is a conversation possible?

It has been said that poetry is the natural language of the human spirit. And so, I have used poetry, specifically, an imagined conversation between the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and myself, to express this desire for speaking together...

Confluence: you and I, Greece and I, Andros and I.

I have used white chalk. It is a humble material. It is ephemeral... like all of our efforts. And so we must be present and find value in what is temporary. This is all we have.

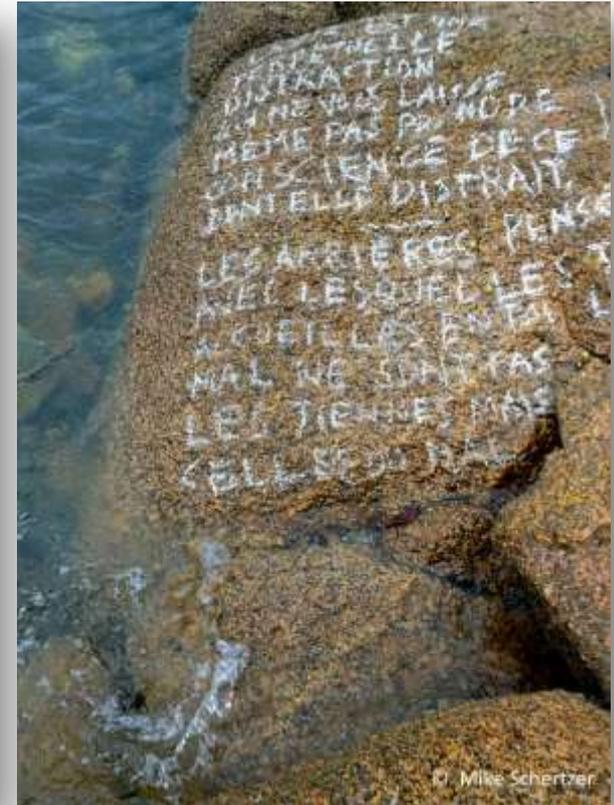
Here, with this wall, I am not conversing with the past. I have not written on the walls of a glorious ruin, but on concrete. I am speaking with what lives and breathes today. No other conversation is possible.

A river was here, now it is gone. And so I converse with what remains, with what resists, with what sleeps and wakes in this river's bed.



For the Festival d'Art de l'Estran I wrote selections from the work of Franz Kafka in white chalk, at low tide, on the rocks on the beach of Tresmeur in Trébeurden, France.

Franz Kafka ( 1883-1924 ) wrote , « l'art est, comme la prière, une main tendue dans l'obscurité, qui veut saisir une part de grâce pour se muer en une main qui donne». With my hands, et white chalk and time as materials, I have tried to pierce the obscurity that envelops us.







J'essaie constamment de communiquer quelque chose  
d'incommunicable, d'expliquer quelque chose d'inexplicable.

- Franz Kafka



Entering the Maison des Enfants Saint-André, look at the cobblestones..

There, you will see the entire courtyard filled with words written in white chalk. The text is from the book *Invisible Cities* by the Italian writer Italo Calvino.

For twelve hours, before the opening of *Nuit Blanche*, the artist Mike Schertzer will be copying the text on the ground. The entire performance will be filmed by Jerome Noel and projected during the night of the event, in real-time, as an accompaniment to the installation.

In the courtyard the visitor can read and wander freely. The words speak of things perishable and of things that last... and this is because they are themselves ephemeral.



© Mike Schertzer



In *Invisible Cities* Italo Calvino wrote, “At times I feel your voice is reaching me from far away, while I am prisoner of a gaudy and unlivable present, where all forms of human society have reached an extreme of their cycle and there is no , imagining what new forms they may assume. And I hear, from your voice, the invisible reasons which make cities live; through which perhaps, once dead, they will come to life again”.

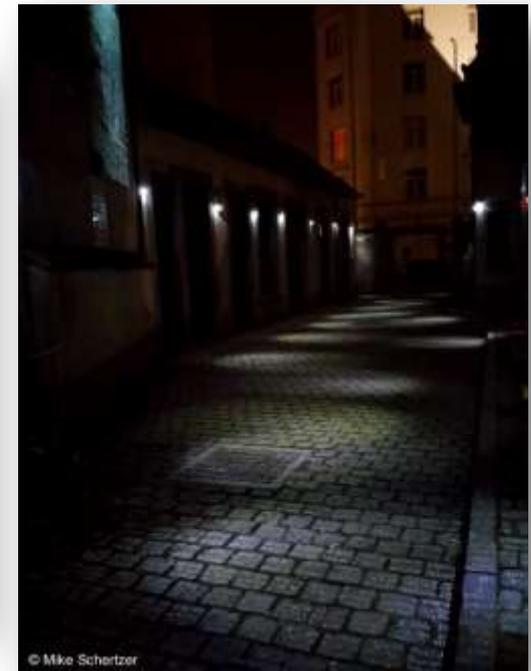


We create because we are being undone. When we create we liberate what is possible; when we destroy we become slaves of the possible. Invisible Cities, its transient traces in white chalk, speaks playfully and simply of the history of this site, and of its future... as it does, evidently, of our past, and of our future. Architecture conditions our humanity. We are where we live and we are how we live. The places we visit, or avoid, are intimately linked with who we are and who we will become. We are always a resident, an inhabitant of something, of some human construction, whether it be utopian or pragmatic, sublime or abominable, real or imaginary.



The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.

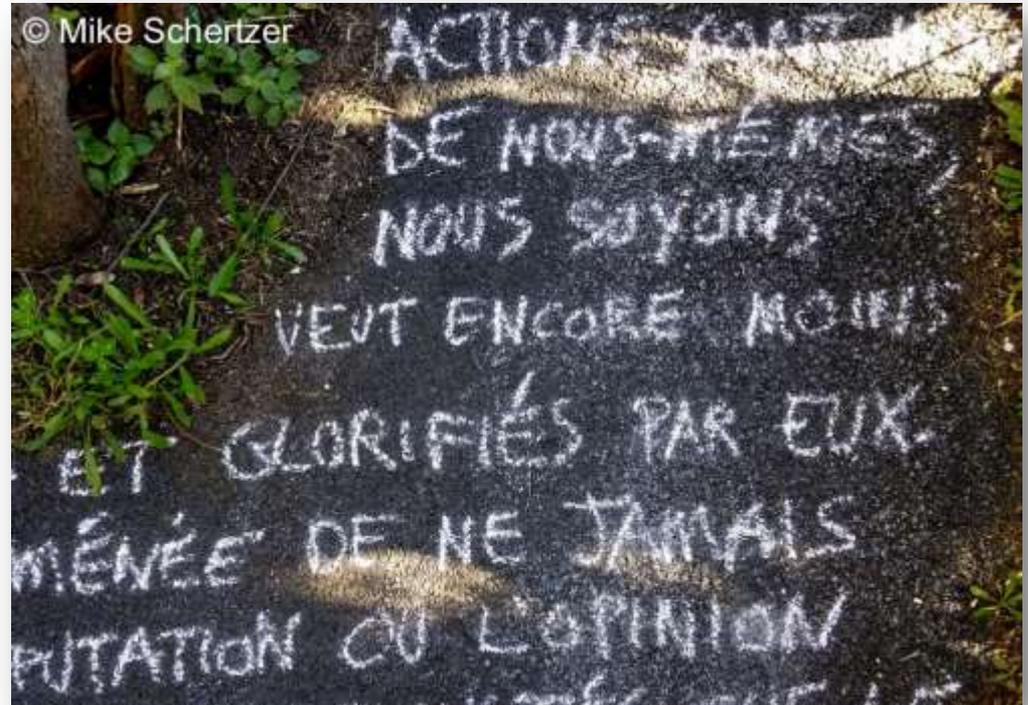
- Italo Calvino



Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) wrote 108 essais. France is composed of 101 départements. For my project *Les essais* I would like to write one essay of Michel de Montaigne, in white chalk, in each département of France.

My literary interventions are characterised by their fugacity. They are ephemeral... like every human activity.

In my work I approach absurdity, futility,... This is because often beauty is never far from such things.



My project 'Les Essais' was launched with *De la Solitude* (Paris, 2014). The idea is simple and ambitious... as is the work of Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), who had the idea to write a book about himself. With his unceasing efforts he was able to leave us a formidable collection of **108** essais gathered together in a book that is strikingly unique. Inspired not only by the content of the *Essays*, but also by his effort and the grandeur of his idea, my project is simple: because Michel de Montaigne wrote **108** essays and in France there are **101** départements, I would like to write an essay of Montaigne, in white chalk, in each département of France. This is a project that will occupy me for the rest of my life... and this would be a welcome and just accompagnement.

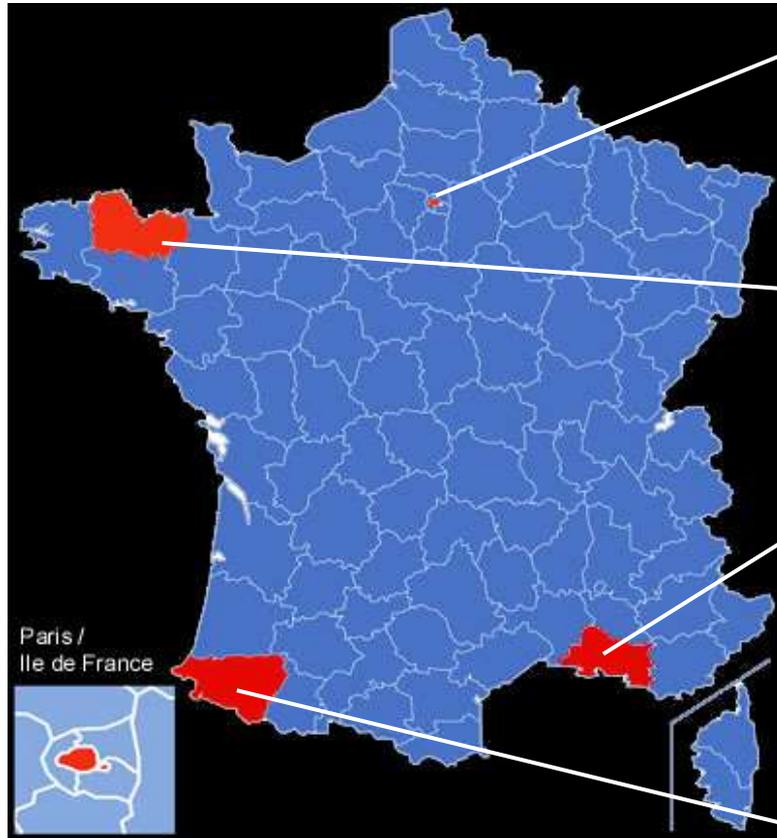
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My literary interventions are characterized by their fugacity; they are ephemeral, like all of our efforts. In *De la Solitude* Montaigne wrote " In solitude be a crowd unto yourself ". This phrase, this command has been a guiding light for my life. And in this life of generalized insomnia how do we inspire our capacity to dream? In this world where we all suffer beneath the dictatorship of time how much time is necessary to express and transmit *the essential* ? Is it possible to seed an impulsion to dream, to inspire a creative desire in the blink of an eye? A man alone – in writing the words of an essay composed in the sixteenth century, would this be enough to topple the tyranny of the quotidian? How to humiliate those things that crush our capacity to dream? This is the nature of my effort here.

Montaigne wrote, " In solitude be a crowd unto yourself ". In writing Montaigne's words and reflections on solitude my dream would be to make them legible and pertinent for those who pass by, those who should never forget that they merit their own solitude.



the 101 departments of France



[poetrydisaster.com/Essais.html](http://poetrydisaster.com/Essais.html)



### ***De la Solitude***

(octobre 2014; Paris ,  
Nuit Blanche 2014)



### ***Sur les Exercices***

(mai 2016; la marée basse  
Saint-Cast-le-Guildo)



### ***Philosopher, c'est apprendre à mourir***

juin 2017; Arles, InSitu 1.2)



### ***De la Gloire***

(juin 2015; Biarritz)





## ***Sur les Exercices***

28 mai 2016. 7h – 19h;  
Saint-Cast-le-Guildo, France  
(on *Les Pierres Sonnantes*)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVnu3zv2ciUv](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVnu3zv2ciUv)



***It is not my actions that I describe : It is myself, i is my very essence***

*- Montaigne*











## ***Philosopher, c'est apprendre à mourir***

29 juin 2017. 1h – 15h; 21 août 2017, 1h – 15h.

enclos Saint Césaire

*InSitu* 1.2, Arles, France



*Le savoir mourir nous affranchit de toute subjection et contrainte*







Aujourd'hui je vous présente *Philosopher c'est apprendre à mourir*, une sélection de trois essais par Michel de Montaigne écrit en craie blanche. Cette installation est une partie de mon projet Les Essais. Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) a composé 108 essais. En France il existe 101 départements. Pour mon projet Les essais je voudrais tracer un essai de Montaigne, en craie blanche, dans chaque département de la France.



© Françoise Le Goff

Ma pratique artistique inclut des performances et des interventions littéraires dans des lieux publics, qui mettent en évidence notre incessante confrontation avec l'éphémère, ainsi que nos efforts, tantôt futiles, tantôt héroïques, à résister à l'impermanence et à trouver refuge dans la permanence et la signifiante.

Vous voyez que j'utilise la craie blanche. Mes interventions littéraires sont caractérisées par leur fugacité. Elles sont éphémères, comme tout notre travail.

Dans mon travail j'approche l'absurdité, la futilité, car parfois la beauté n'est pas si loin de telles choses.

Nous sommes à Arles, et nous connaissons qu'il y a un passé qui ne passera jamais... mais nous oublions qu'il y a des futurs qui n'arriveront jamais. Et à cause de ça le présent, le moment, cherche toujours une orientation, une direction, un sens.

Le moment est exigeant. Sa générosité, ses richesses, sont repérables pour ceux qui sont présents. Il faut être là, il faut être ici...

S'il faut être présent c'est surtout présent à soi-même. La question posée par Montaigne, et le moteur pour toutes ses recherches et digressions : comment vivre ? est une question pour toutes et tous... et elle est une sollicitation qui arrive avec toute sa force quand nous prenons le présent par la main, quand nous regardons dans les yeux ce qui est en train de partir, et quand nous embrassons ce que vient d'arriver.

Le moment— moi, j'habite là... une frontière infranchissable, mais accueillante. Et aujourd'hui, avec vous, avec Montaigne, avec un passé qui ne passera jamais, nous avons la chance de partager et d'accepter la générosité singulière du présent.

Comment vivre ? N'aies pas peur... C'est à nous à répondre.





## **De la Gloire**

23-24 juin 2015. 21h – 13h; Biarritz ,France)

(la falaise, entre l'avenue de l'Impératrice et la Phare)



*La récompense d'une bonne action, c'est de l'avoir faite*

- Seneca







Pour mon intervention *De la Solitude* je propose (en consultation avec la Ville de Paris) d'écrire l'essai *De la Solitude* de Michel de Montaigne, à la craie blanche, sur la façade du Maison de la Recherche (4 rue des Irlandais). Mon projet sera incorporé dans la zone 'Panthéon' et fera partie des manifestations associées. L'écriture prendra entre dix et douze heures. Je commencerai le soir du 3 octobre et je terminerai au cours de l'après-midi du lendemain, le 4 octobre. Je pense que l'éclairage de la rue sera suffisant pour pouvoir lire les textes ; néanmoins un éclairage supplémentaire pourrait être utile afin d'augmenter le contraste entre le texte et le mur .

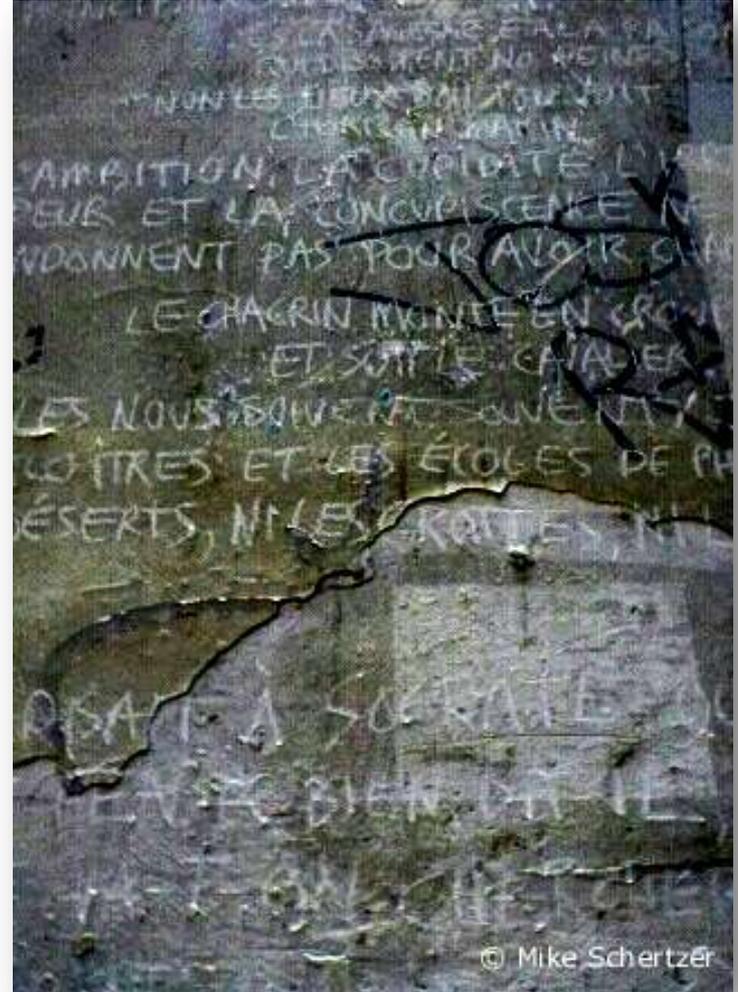
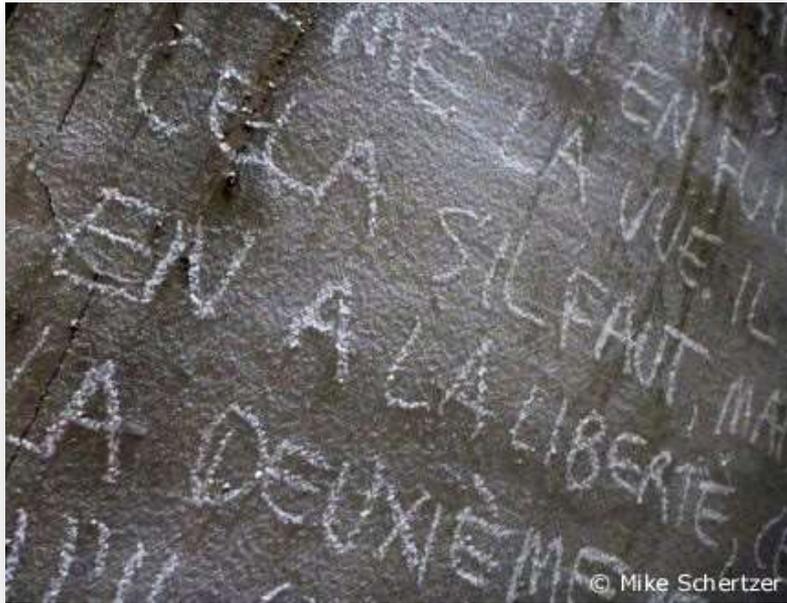
*De la Solitude* sera l'inauguration du projet 'Les Essais'. En effet, j'envisage d'écrire à la craie blanche, un essai de Montaigne dans chaque département de la France .



My literary interventions are characterized by their fugacity. They are ephemeral, as are all of our efforts. In *On Solitude* Michel de Montaigne wrote, "*In solitude be a crowd unto yourself*". This phrase, this command, has always been a touchstone for me. In this generalized insomnia that is our contemporary world, how can one nurture our capacity to dream? In this world where we all must submit to the dictatorship of time, how much time is necessary to express and transmit the *essential* ? Is it possible to stimulate the impulsion to dream, or inspire a creative desire in the blink of an eye? A man, alone— writing the words of an essay composed in the sixteenth century in chalk on a wall... is this enough to overcome the tyranny of the quotidian? How can one humiliate all that seeks to eradicate our capacity to dream? Such is the nature of my effort, *mon essai*.

In my work I approach and become intimate with absurdity, futility... because often beauty is not far from such things.

Montaigne wrote, "*In solitude be a crowd unto yourself*". In retracing the words of Montaigne my dream is to render his thoughts on the subject of solitude present to all those who pass by, to all those who should never forget that they will always merit their own solitude.



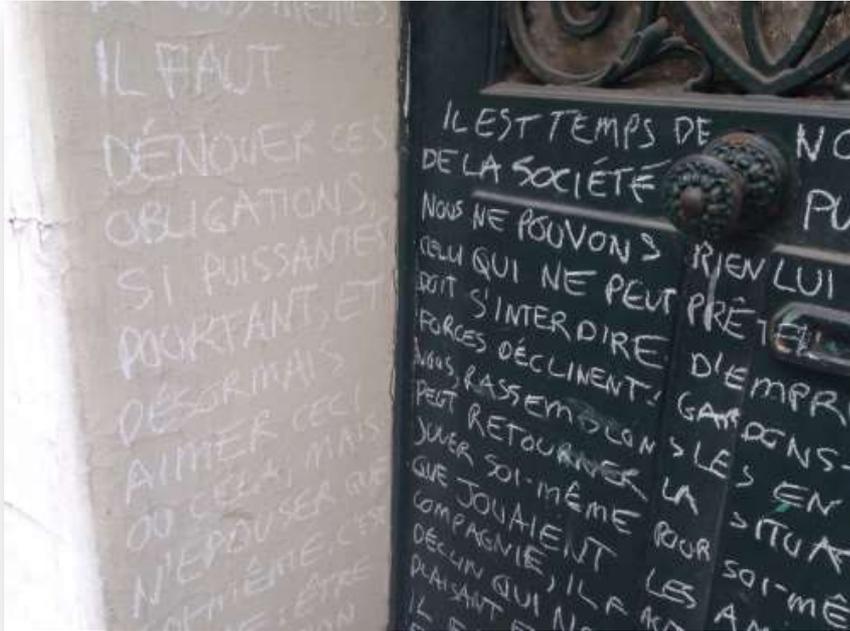
2008 - present



© Mike Schertzer



2008 - present



Looking at the words on the wall, a child remarked, "everything will be gone tomorrow... you have wasted a lot of time for nothing". I responded, "I never waste time, or lose time, when I do something like this... time stays with me; it is my companion".



© Mike Schertzer



*Les Remparts*

21 septembre, 2013



*La Promenade d'un Sceptique*

18, 19 septembre, 2013



**Langres Diderot 2013**

*Langres, France*

# *La Promenade d'un Sceptique*

## **La Promenade de Blanchefontaine, Langres**

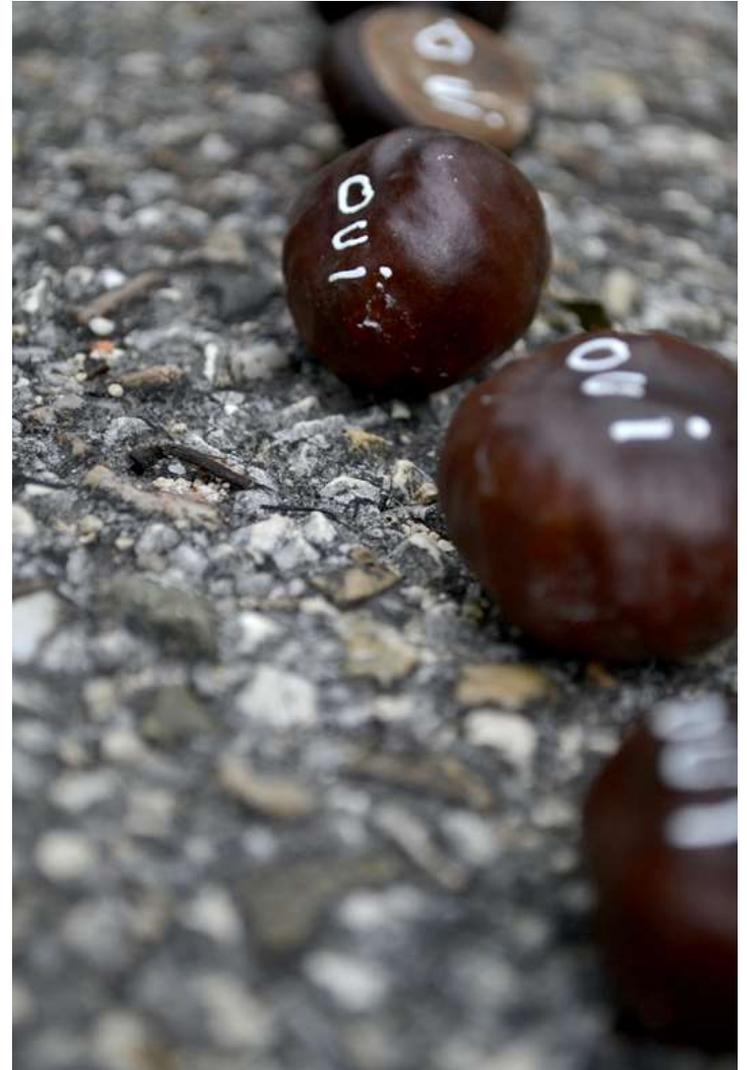
18, 19 septembre, 2013

Environ 5000 marrons et écorces sur lesquels j'ai écrit des textes de Denis Diderot avec l'encre blanc. La publique était invitée d'écrire leurs propres mots, ou ceux de Diderot .

La Promenade d'un Sceptique



La Promenade d'un Sceptique



MANIFESTATION

## Mike Schertzer donne la parole... aux marrons



Le public est invité à écrire sur de l'écorce ou des marrons des extraits de textes signés Diderot ou une phrase qui lui sera proposée.

Artiste et écrivain, Mike Schertzer aime travailler également comme chercheur en langage, notamment à l'Institut Curie, à Paris. Un mélange des genres qui peut paraître surprenant, mais pour le Canadien c'est ce qui lui fait le plus de plaisir. C'est ainsi qu'il réalise l'œuvre éphémère qu'il installera en plein centre de la ville de Langres. Cette œuvre intitulée "La Promenade du sceptique" à l'image de ceux qui voient", sera inspirée à Diderot, notamment les mots de préface de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle avec ceux de la page 720. "Nous avons écrit en place un dessin et un titre à la M2K pour que les visiteurs du site puissent accéder à notre œuvre". Nous espérons que vous pourrez découvrir à l'usage de ceux qui voient, la nature, l'espace et le temps.



Mike Schertzer proposera une œuvre éphémère en deux temps dans son atelier, le philosophe nous invite à l'usage de ceux qui voient, la nature, l'espace et le temps.

P. O.

COUP DE FLASH

## La Promenade du sceptique prend forme



Par groupe de douze ou quatorze personnes des habitants de Langres et des environs sont venus participer à cette œuvre éphémère impulsée par un artiste canadien.

L'artiste canadien Mike Schertzer a su attirer du monde puisque entre 14 h et 16 h 30, des habitants de Langres ou des environs se sont rendus à la M2K, hier, pour laisser quelques mots sur des marrons ou des écorces.

Avec des extraits de textes de Diderot ou des mots de leur propre cru, toutes ces personnes ont pris part à la réalisation de la première partie de l'œuvre éphémère de Mike Schertzer intitulée "La Promenade du sceptique, à l'usage de ceux qui voient" qui sera installée allée Blanchefontaine.

*«Je suis vraiment content, les gens sont très impliqués et appliqués et nous avons déjà commencé à installer quelques marrons sur le site de Blanchefontaine»,* explique l'artiste.

Cet après-midi, le public pourra venir voir ce chemin de mots et même le prolonger en poursuivant ce travail d'écriture avec l'artiste.

# *Les Remparts*

## **La Promenade de Montréal, Langres**

Minuit – 14h , 21 septembre, 2013

Entre minuit et 14h le 21 septembre, 2013, j'ai écrit ,en craie blanche, sur les remparts (the Promenade de Montréal) de Langres.

*video* (Diderot 2013)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnITLbt-2BI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnITLbt-2BI)

Les Remparts



Les Remparts



## Les Remparts



**Les Marches** Text by Franz Kafka; white chalk  
quai d'Anjou (4ème), Paris, France. 2019





## Devant la loi

Text by Franz Kafka; white chalk  
rue de Citeaux (12ème), Paris, France. 2019



# Interventions 2012- present

*Pain Proust (2012 - present)*

*Transport commun (2013)*

*Numéros utiles (2017 - 2018)*

*Petites pièces (2018 - present )*

*La Résistance (2018 - present)*

*Les Greffes (2019 - present)*

*Les Idées Fixes (2019 - present)*

*[poetryisdisaster.com/proustpain.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/proustpain.html)*

*[poetryisdisaster.com/Transport.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Transport.html)*





## Pain Proust

2011 - present; Jardin du Luxembourg,  
Paris, France.

feeding *À la recherche du temps perdu*, by **Marcel Proust**, to birds.

Birds sing because they have nothing to read.

“ it is in moments of illness that we are compelled to recognize that we live not alone but chained to a creature of a different kingdom, whole worlds apart, who has no knowledge of us and by whom it is impossible to make ourselves understood “

(Proust)

*materials that exist*: assembled poem, consumed books,  
photos, comments.

[poetryisdisaster.com/painproust.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/painproust.html)



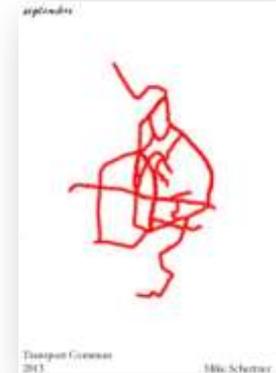




## Transport commun 2013; Paris, France.

a year in the transit system of Paris.

A record of bus and metro trips (RATP; Paris, France) taken each day during 2013. The number of each bus and metro line is indicated for each day, resulting in a code. These codes are added together to give a sum at the end of each month. The total for the entire year is indicated below, and functions as a numerical representation of my passage through the year. I have also graphically represented my movements through the system of public transportation in Paris for each month and for the year in total, which can be interpreted as a rudimentary circulatory system of my year... 2013.

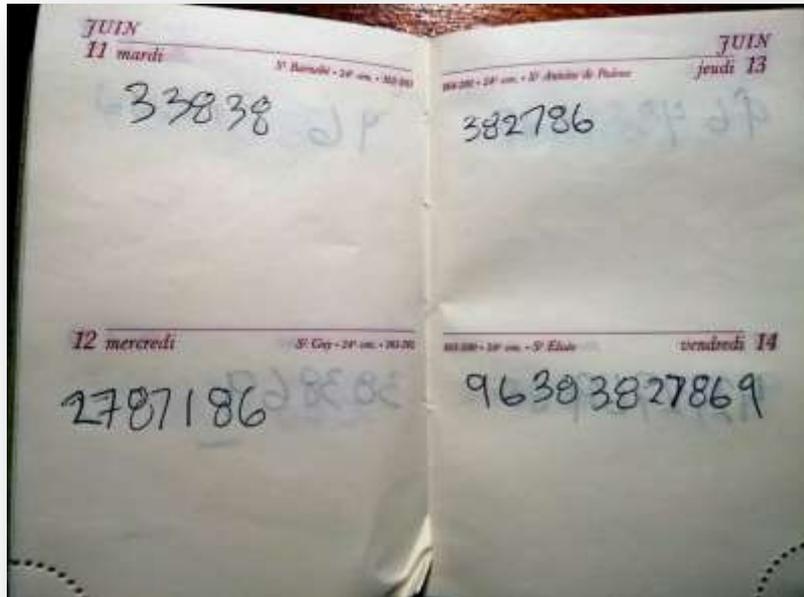


*materials that exist:* original notebook, digital files, final map, digital sketches, sound file of final voyage

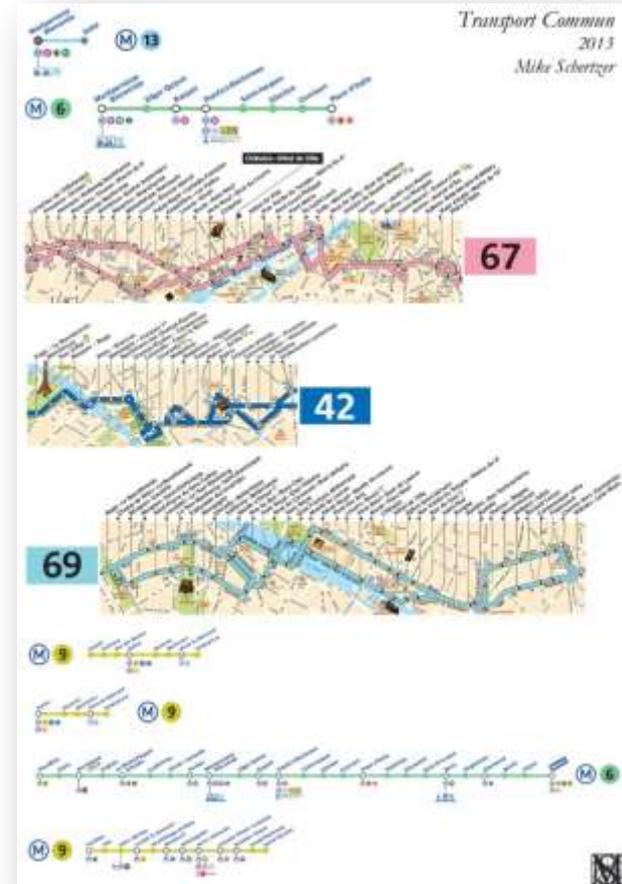
[poetryisdisaster.com/Transport.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Transport.html)



Yearly sum of all transit taken:  
**136674269990609**



agenda with bus/metro numbers taken each day



ultimate route assembled from  
yearly sum of transit taken



## 2017 - 2018 Paris, France

Useful numbers slide beneath my door regularly: police, firefighters, ambulance, locksmiths, plumbers...

I considered that should I add all these useful numbers together I would arrive at the most useful number imaginable. To arrive at this ultimate number I collected every *useful number* I received until I filled an accounting book.



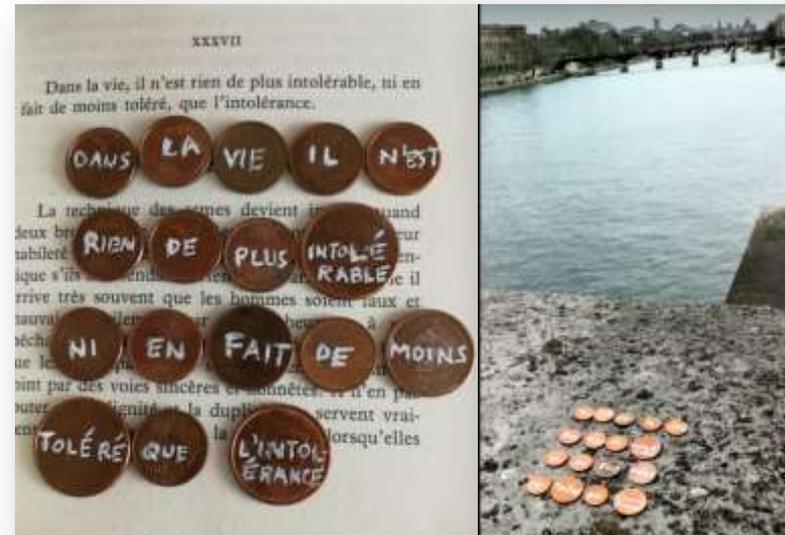
**2018 – present;  
Paris, France**

*Words, thoughts, poems, written on coins and left in public...  
in this vale of tears, where everything has its place, its rank, all is a question of value*

value	date	text	author	location
1.14	oct-18	A une passante	Charles Baudelaire	La Petite Lumière (rue Boulard, 14ème)
0.94	févr-19	de La Pierre	Osip Mandelstam	rue Férou (6ème)
0.31	mars-19	pensée XXXVII	Giacomo Leopardi	pont du Carrousel (1er)
0.31	mars-19	L'art est comme la prière	Franz Kafka	quai Henri IV (12ème)
1.54	mai-19	Alphabet lithique	Raymond Queneau	Panthéon (5ème)



**1.54** : Alphabet lithique, Raymond Queneau



**0.31** : Pensée XXXVIII, Giacomo Leopardi



**2018 - present ;  
various locations**

*Art is perhaps the only domain where  
our efforts at simplification do not result in tragedies*



Albert Camus  
rue des Irlandais (Paris)



Octavio Paz  
rue Tournefort (Paris)



Novalis  
(Livadia, Andros, Greece)



**2019 - present ;  
various locations**



## **Franz Kafka**

Jardin du Père Teihard du Chardin  
(blvd. Morland, Paris 4<sup>ème</sup>)

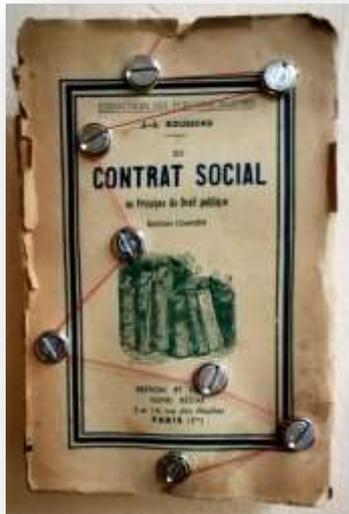


## **E.M. Cioran**

Cimetière du Montparnasse  
(13<sup>ème</sup> Div., Paris 14<sup>ème</sup>)



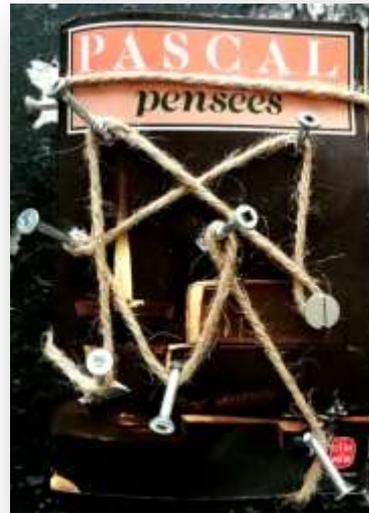
2019 – present : altered books



**Du Contrat Social**  
(J-J. Rousseau)



**Dernier poems d'amour**  
(P. Eluard)



**Pensées**  
(Pascal)



**Par delà du bien et du mal**  
(F. Nietzsche)



# Installation / Performance Canada 1999-2008

*Opacity Project (2000 –2008)*

[poetryisdisaster.com/Op.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Op.htm)

*Memento mori (2006)*

*I am not the end (2006)*

*The prince (2005)*

*Daybreak (2004)*

*Utopia (2003)*

*Total Domination (2002)*

*The Grand Inquisitor (2001)*

*Low Tide (2000)*

*Pedestrian guidance (2000)*

*Disextinctionary (2000)*

*Aidez-moi (2000-2008)*

*Au revoir (2000-2008)*

*Dispense (2000-2008)*

*Anti-room (2000)*

*Discurse (1999)*

*Contradiction (2001)*

[poetryisdisaster.com/pH.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/pH.htm)

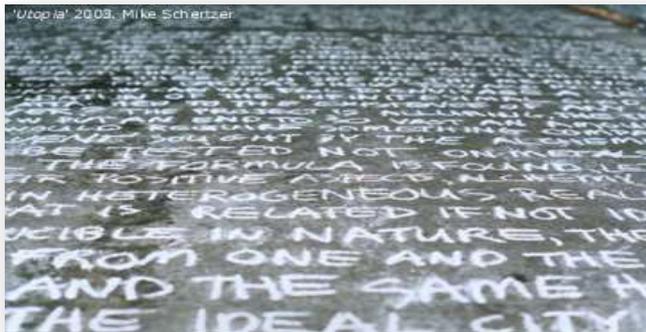


The **Opacity Project** began in 1999 with **Discurse** (marathon readings of entire books in unlikely places). It continues to this day. The precept of this project is *art you will never see*. The interventions in this project are necessarily ephemeral, and situated in public spaces. The goal is the direct involvement of someone with art, without the mediation of a stage, or publicity, or expectation... and especially not the distracting presence of the artist.

Some of these interventions are still ongoing... some for the reason of their practical length (Pain Proust), others because there is no reason to end them (Au Revoir, Aidez-moi).

It is important to understand that the **Opacity Project** has no relation to either the **Mendacity Project** or the **Atrocity Project**, both of which receive stable, institutional funding levels and enjoy the participation of the military, the media, and in some cases entire nations.

Please keep this in mind.



To work and create *for nothing*... to know that one's creation has no future, to see one's work destroyed in a day while being aware that, fundamentally, this has no more importance than building for centuries— this is the difficult wisdom that absurd thought sanctions.

- Albert Camus

sometimes  
the worst thing about  
public art  
is not the art

- Diogenes







## I am not the end

2006; Vancouver, Canada.

Texts of **Jospeh Joubert** written  
in white chalk for 9 hours.

"In these times when, to express ourselves well,  
we must speak in a way that others do not."

- Joseph Joubert

*materials that exist:* photos

[poetryisdisaster.com/lamnot.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/lamnot.html)





## Memento mori

Eulogy for a fictitious suicide  
printed on copper sheet and  
nailed to a tree.

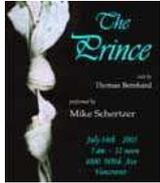
*What we do not write for those who do exist  
we write for one who does not exist*

*materials that exist: photos*

[poetryisdisaster.com/Mm.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Mm.htm)

2006; Vancouver, Canada.





## Gargoyles

2005; Vancouver, Canada.

excerpts from *Gargoyles*, by **Thomas Bernhard** written in white chalk for 7 hours.

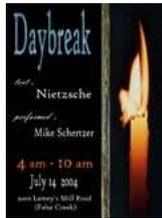
“Whoever is listening to something you are talking about approaches only as far as its outermost boundary. Our whole life is nothing but an approach to the outermost boundaries of life,” the prince said.” – *Thomas Bernhard*

*materials that exist:* photos



[poetryisdisaster.com/prince.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/prince.htm)





## Daybreak

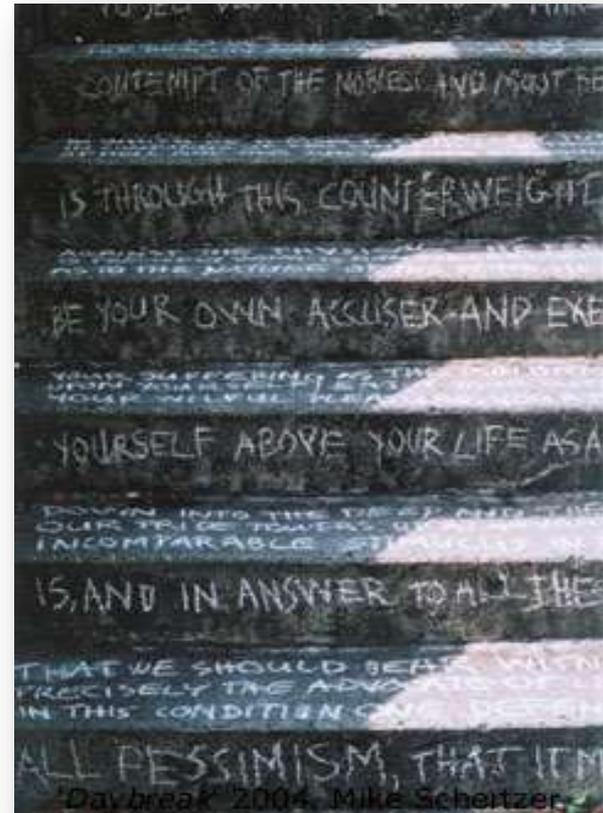
excerpts from *Daybreak*, by **Friedrich Nietzsche** written in white chalk for 6 hours.

“The triumph of the ascetic over himself, his glance turned inwards which beholds man split asunder into a sufferer and a spectator, and henceforth gazes out into the outer world only in order to gather as it were wood for his own pyre.” – *Friedrich Nietzsche*

*materials that exist:* photos, video

[poetryisdisaster.com/Daybreak.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Daybreak.htm)

2004; Vancouver, Canada.





## Utopia

2003; Vancouver, Canada.

*The Mechanism of Utopia*, by **E.M. Cioran** written in white chalk for 8 hours.

“Whenever I happen to be in a city of any size, I marvel that riots do not break out every day: massacres, unspeakable carnage, a doomsday chaos. How can so many human beings coexist in a space so confined without destroying each other, without hating each other *to death*? As a matter of fact, they do hate each other, but they are not equal to their hatred. And it is this mediocrity, this impotence, that saves society, that assures its continuance, its stability.” — *E.M. Cioran*



*materials that exist:* photos, video

[poetryisdisaster.com/utopia.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/utopia.htm)





## Total Domination

2002; Vancouver, Canada.

an excerpt from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, by **Hannah Arendt** written in white chalk for 12 hours.

“Once the moral person has been killed, the one thing that still prevents men from being made into living corpses is the differentiation of the individual, his unique identity..” – *Hannah Arendt*

*materials that exist:* photos, video

[poetryisdisaster.com/Total.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Total.htm)





## The Grand Inquisitor

2001; Vancouver, Canada.

A chapter from *The Brothers Karamazov* by **Fyodor Dostoyevsky**, written in white chalk on railway ties for 12 hours.

For all the *unfinished experimental creatures created as a mockery*; for all those who have been climbing and who reached *their* end only to discover that the ladder has fallen and that the entire time they believed they were ascending they were only crawling; for all those who have this muddy truth on their lips— *the heaven I wished to approach has become an oppressive ideal which only illuminates my filthy hands and my bruised knees and my torn shoes*; for all those who are suspect citizens of dubious responsibilities; for all those who refuse to turn away from the shameful reality which is that *freedom* is usually the last thing people actually want, as it is usually the first thing they are willing to relinquish whenever they are challenged; I will perform ...



*materials that exist:* photos, video, objects

[poetryisdisaster.com/writing/GI.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/writing/GI.htm)





## Low Tide

2000; Vancouver, Canada.

the essay *To Philosophize is to Learn How to Die* by **Michel de Montaigne** written in white chalk on rocks at low tide.

“Let us disarm him of his novelty and strangeness, let us converse and be familiar with him, and have nothing so frequent in our thoughts as death.”

– Michel de Montaigne

*materials that exist:* photos, video  
audio

[poetryisdisaster.com/lt01.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/lt01.htm)





## Pedestrian Guidance

2000; Vancouver, Canada.

A quote by **Thomas Bernhard** written in white chalk on the sidewalk.

“Life is a school in which death is being taught.”

– *Thomas Bernhard*



*materials that exist:* photos

[poetryisdisaster.com/PedG.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/PedG.htm)





## Disextinctionary

2000; Vancouver, Canada.

individual words from an English dictionary hidden in fruit and left for insects and other animals to feed on.

*materials that exist:* photos, wordlist.

[poetryisdisaster.com/Disex.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Disex.htm)



'Disextinctionary' 2003, Mike Schertzer





## Aidez-moi

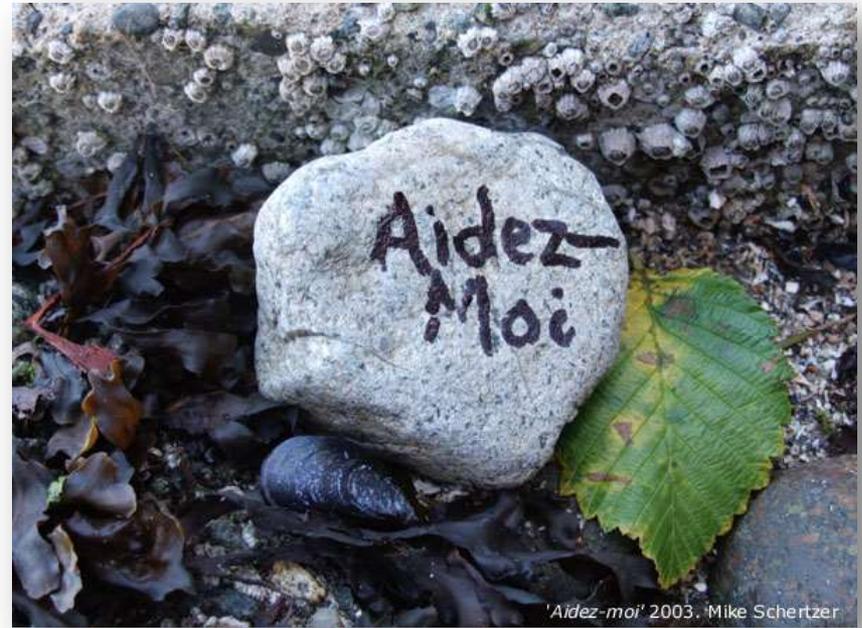
2000; Vancouver, Canada.

Water-based ink written on rocks at low tide on beaches throughout Vancouver.

*Sometimes erosion is too much to bear.*

*materials that exist:* photos.

[poetryisdisaster.com/Aidez.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Aidez.htm)





## Au Revoir

Water-based ink written on  
dead leaves and thrown out  
the window.

*some playthings of absurdity  
blowing down a street near you...*

*materials that exist: photos.*

[poetryisdisaster.com/AuR.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/AuR.htm)

2000; Vancouver, Canada.





## Dispense

2000; Vancouver, Canada.

installation of ***weeping stations*** (kleenex packets painted black and then opened and fastened to trees or walls or other objects throughout Vancouver.

*materials that exist:* photos,  
weeping stations,  
eye repair kit.

[poetryisdisaster.com/WpSt.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/WpSt.htm)





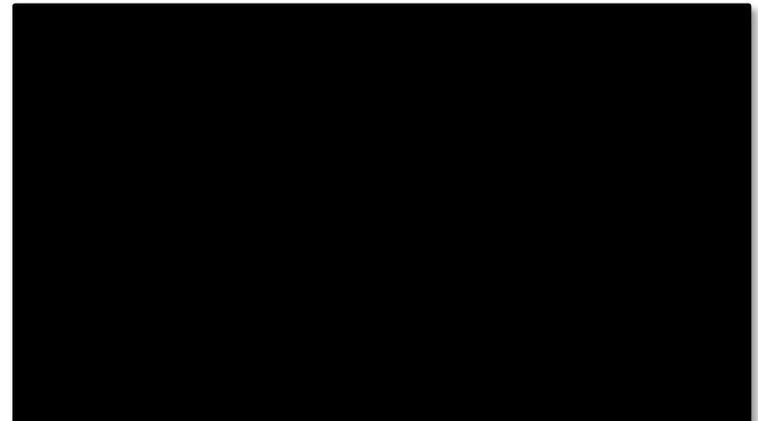
## The Anti-room

2000; Vancouver, Canada.

Objects were placed in the same public location over a long period of time. No photos were taken and no record exists of the objects used. They may or may not exist. The *Anti-room* may or may not exist... It is a concentration of dark matter. It is somewhere in Vancouver. If you can find it you are welcome to stay.

*materials that exist:* none

[poetryisdisaster.com/Anti.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Anti.html)





## Discourse

1999; Vancouver, Canada.

marathon readings of entire books in places you would least expect them.

*materials that exist:* photos,  
video.

[poetryisdisaster.com/Discourse.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Discourse.htm)

### ***Books read:***

***The Loser*** by Thomas Bernhard  
Angus Drive, Noon - 6pm  
July 17th, 1999

***Invisible Cities*** by Italo Calvino  
on and under the Burrard Street bridge,  
3pm - 7pm  
Sept. 25th, 1999



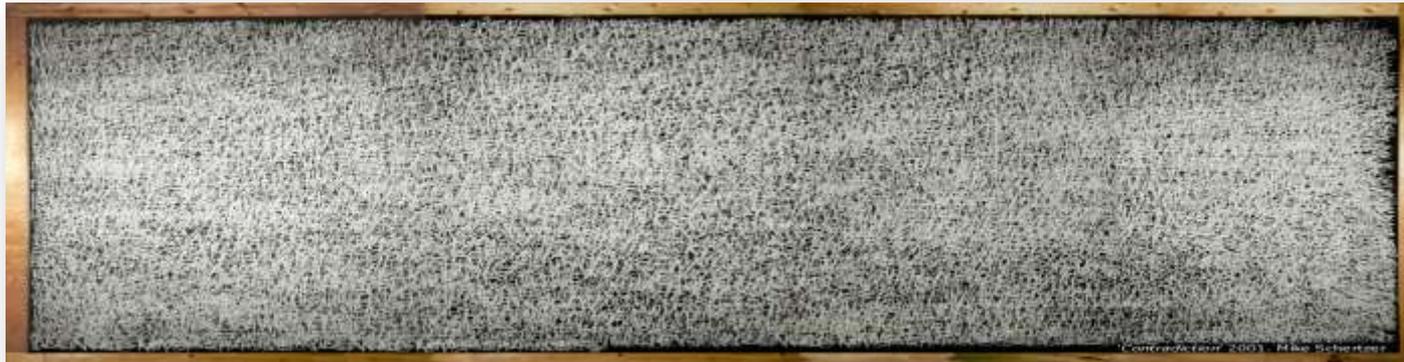
## Contradiction

2001; Vancouver, Canada.

The performance consisted in writing the words *I will never change*, in white chalk on a blackboard, for 7 hours.

*Every action, repeated in a limited field, eventually negates itself.*

I demonstrated this principal using a black wall, chalk, 4 words, & time.



*materials that exist:* photos,  
video

[poetryisdisaster.com/pH.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/pH.htm)





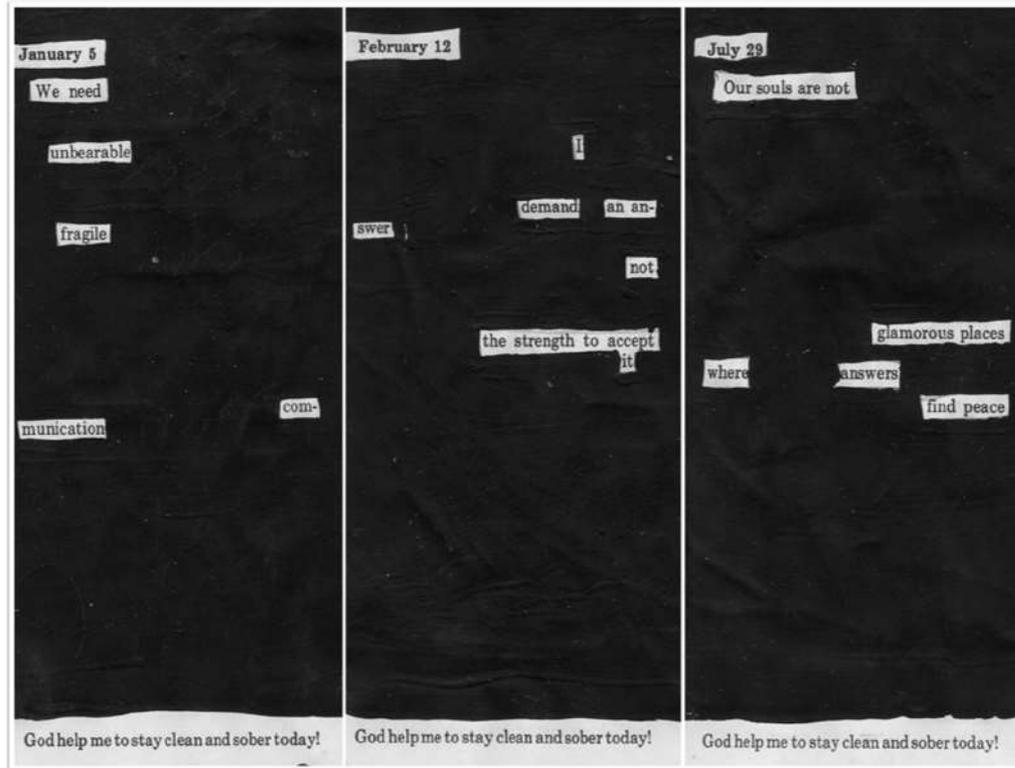
*Negatexts (artist books)*

[poetryisdisaster.com](http://poetryisdisaster.com)

*Negatexts* [poetryisdisaster.com/Neg.htm](http://poetryisdisaster.com/Neg.htm)



“Art can never be so well served as by a negative thought.  
Its dark and humiliated proceedings are as necessary to the  
understanding of a great work as black is to white” – Albert Camus.



Day by Day, 2001

## *Titles of full books:*

- 1997 The Sob  
P.S  
Halt (Blessed Block)
- 1998 12 Days  
Playtime  
Agreement  
You / Me  
Eat  
What Makes my Cat Purr  
Happy  
BAble / The Vale of  
Communication  
A Christmas Greeting  
Salutation #1
- 1999 The Bride's Instruction  
Australia, in brief  
Wet  
I Can
- 2000 Wound Healing
- 2001 Day by Day
- 2003 Feng Shui in Simple Lessons
- 2004 Les plus qu'humains  
13  
Né
- 2015 Cata



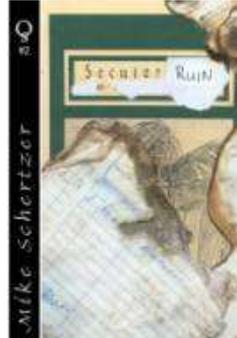


Mayday  
(Opacity Series #3)

2003

unpublished

*one line of overheard  
conversation per day for  
one year... and other  
observations.*

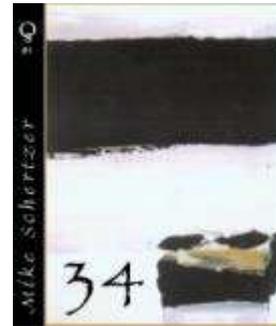


CACA vol.31:  
Secular Ruin  
(Opacity Series #2)

2003

unpublished

*the word **love**  
replaced by the word  
**ruin** in a particularly  
poorly written book by  
a peculiarly overvalued  
author.*

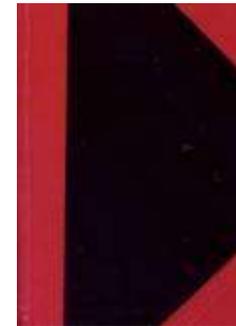


34  
(Opacity Series #1)

2003

unpublished

*page 34 of 34 books.*



Encyclo-  
desiropedia  
(vol.2)

2003

single book

*the word **yes** hand-  
written for 194 pages.*



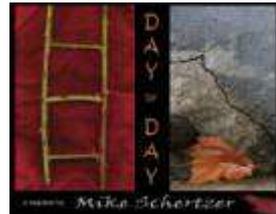


## Correspondence

2003

edition of 2

*meditation on the death of Paul Celan, with images.*



## Day by Day

2003

self-published  
edition of 50

*catalogue for **The Negatextual Resource Centre** (an exhibition of negatexts).*



## Dissociative Fugue

2000

single book

*complete record of the performance of the same name; includes text from **A Personal Dictionary**.*



## Dissociative Fugue

2000

self-published  
edition of 50

*excerpts from the performance of the same name.*

out of print



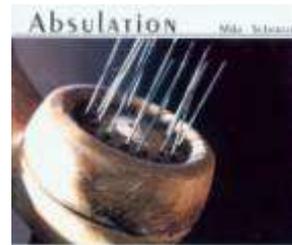


Encyclo-desiropedia  
(vol.1)

1998

single book

*the word **yes** hand-written for 194 pages.*



Absulation

1998

self-published  
edition of 50

poetry



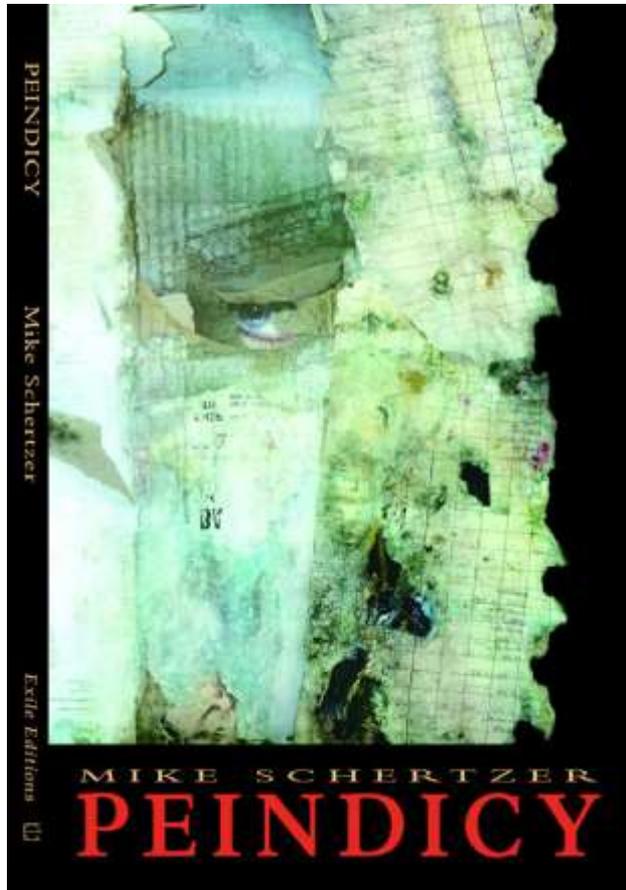
Umbilicorium

1998

single book

*accompaning text for the  
performance of the same name.*





## Books

- The House of Misfortune.** 1994, Tonguenail Books; ISBN 0-9698008-0-0  
**Short Films from the Fourteenth Century.** 1994 Exile Editions; ISBN 1-55096-0490  
**a hand for the drowned;** 1994, Ekstasis Editions; ISBN 0-921215-85-1  
**A Personal Dictionary.** 1997, Tonguenail Books; ISBN 0-9698008-1-9  
**Cipher and Poverty (The Book of Nothing).** 1998, Ekstasis Editions; ISBN 1-896860-31-1  
**Absolution.** 1998, (chapbook, limited edition of 50)  
**Dissociative Fugue.** 2000, (chapbook with colour plates, limited edition of 50)  
**Young Bloods (stories from Exile, 1972-2001).** 2001, Exile Editions; ISBN 1-55096-636-7  
**Threshold.** 2003, (chapbook, limited edition of 50)  
**Devil's Wine.** 2003 (chapbook, unlimited edition)  
**Correspondence.** 2003 (chapbook, edition of 2)  
**Threshold.** 2004 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**Devil's Wine.** 2004 (chapbook, unlimited edition)  
**Consequence.** 2005 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**7 (new poems).** 2005 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**The Endroom.** 2005 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**Peindicy.** 2007, Exile Editions; ISBN 978-1-55096-103-4  
**Instrangements.** 2007 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**Invigorations.** 2008 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**Uncommon Hours.** 2009 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**Mortivations.** 2011 (chapbook, edition of 50)  
**Euthanasiasms (A personal Dictionary 2004-2013).** 2013  
**Assignations.** 2013 (chapbook, edition of 50)



# Sublimage

*(collage et peinture sous verre)*

*art* [poetryisdisaster.com/art.html](http://poetryisdisaster.com/art.html)

*video* (dans l'atelier) [youtu.be/dWPgcLooPy0](https://youtu.be/dWPgcLooPy0)

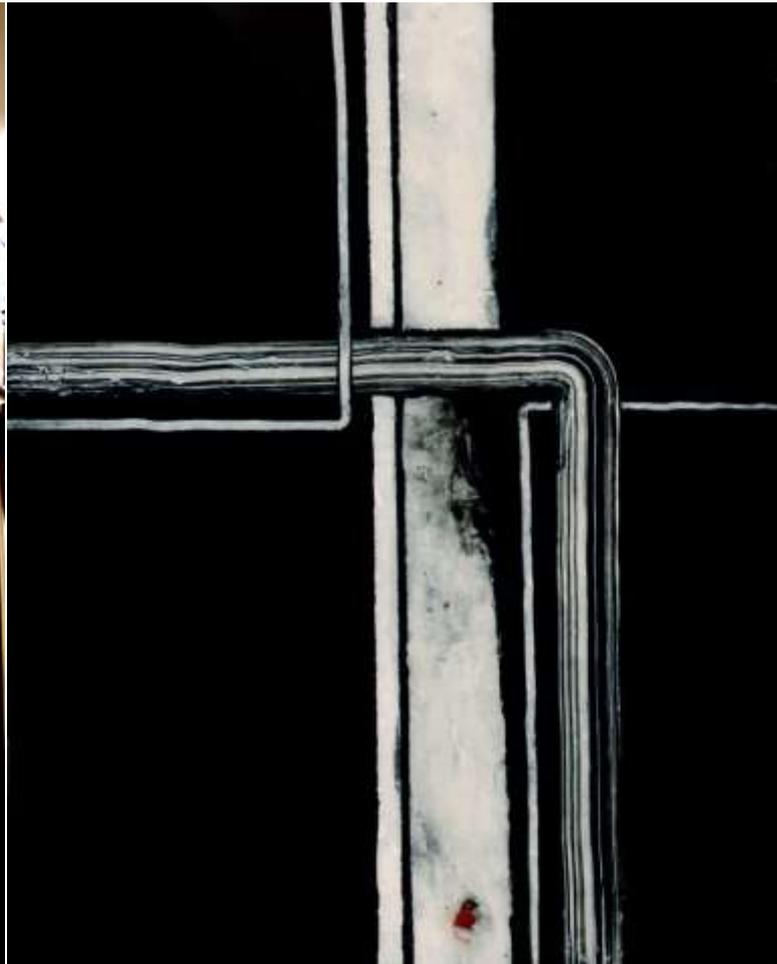


Sublimage (collage on glass)

video (in the studio) [youtu.be/dWPgcLooPy0](https://youtu.be/dWPgcLooPy0)



Mike Schertzer

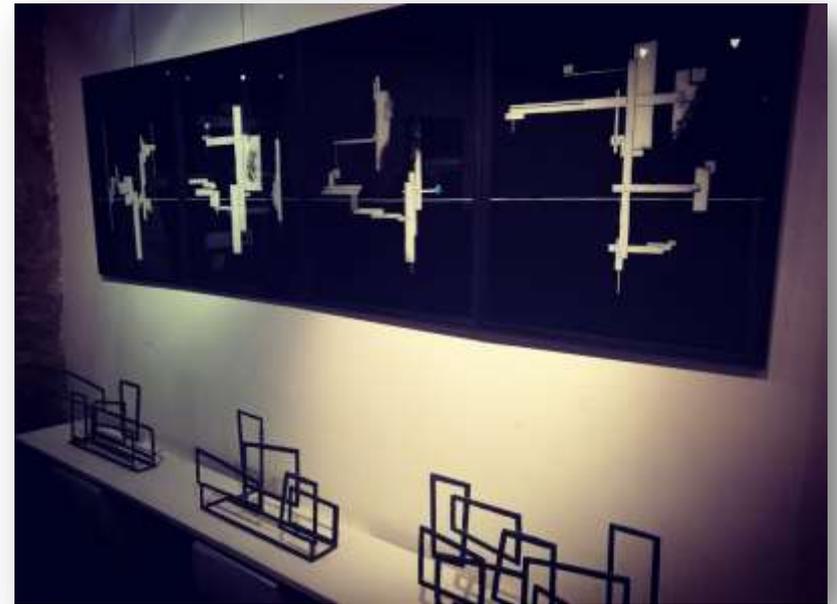


Mike Schertzer

Intercession #19; 2012







## Intercessions

Mike Schertzer (sublimage), Delphine Brabant (sculpture)

**Galérie Caroline Tresca,  
decembre 2016**





*(papier collage, acrylique sous verre; 7,5 cm x 2,7 cm; boîte 14 x 10 cm)*



- 2019** **Devant la loi; Les Marches:** two texts by Franz Kafka, rue de Citeaux and quai d'Anjou, Paris, august 2019.
- 2019** **Confluence.** Festival Epitopou 19, Andros, Greece. Mult-day chalk performance of texts by Pablo Neruda and Mike Schertzer.
- 2018** **L'inexprimable.** Festival d'Art de l'Estran, Trébeurden, France. 12 hour chalk performance of texts by Franz Kafka.
- 2017** **Philosopher, c'est apprendre à mourir (*Les Essais*).** In Situ 1.2 Arles, France. 18 hour chalk performance of an essay by Michel de Montaigne.
- 2016** **Intercessions.** Galerie Caroline Tresca, Paris.
- 2016** **Sur les Exercices (*Les Essais*).** Saint-Cast-Le-Guildo, France. 12 hour chalk performance of an essay by Michel de Montaigne.
- 2015** **Les Villes Invisibles;** Nuit Blanche 2015. Brussels, Belgium. 12 hour chalk performance of texts by Italo Calvino.
- 2015** **De la Gloire (*Les Essais*).** Biarritz, France. 16 hour chalk performance of an essay by Michel de Montaigne.
- 2014** **De la Solitude (*Les Essais*);** Nuit Blanche 2014. Paris, France. 12 hour chalk performance of an essay by Michel de Montaigne.
- 2013** **À l'usage de ceux qui voient; Diderot 2013.** Langres, France  
**Transport Commun** (daily archive of bus and metro trips); Paris France.
- 2012** **Une Déclaration; Rencontres Philosophiques.** Langres, France
- 2011** **Pain Proust,** literary intervention. Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris, France.
- 2009** **Uncommon Hours** (*recent additions to A Personal Dictionary*) self-published, 50 copies.
- 2008** **Invigoration** (*recent additions to A Personal Dictionary*) self-published, 50 copies.  
**Words Learned at the Bottom of a Well,** exhibition of recent sublimage. A440Hz, Vancouver, Canada.
- 2007** **Instrangements** (*recent additions to A Personal Dictionary*) self-published.  
**Peindicy** published (Exile Editions)  
excerpts from **Peindicy** published in Exile vol.31 (1).
- 2006** excerpts from *Peindicy* published in Exile vol. 30 (2).  
**Hope is an Illegitimate Heir:** exhibition of sublimage and negatexts, Jarvis Hall Fine Frames, Calgary, Canada.  
**I Am Not The End:** 4 hour chalk performance of excerpts from the notebooks of Joseph Joubert; Vancouver, Canada.
- 2005** **Consequence** (*recent additions to A Personal Dictionary*) self-published.  
**The Prince:** 6 hour chalk performance of a text by Thomas Bernhard. Vancouver Canada.  
**7** (new poems) self-published.  
**The Endroom** (*recent additions to A Personal Dictionary*) self-published.
- 2004** excerpts from *A Personal Dictionary* published in Exile vol.27 (4).  
**Daybreak:** 6 hour chalk performance of excerpts from Friedrich Nietzsche; Vancouver, Canada.  
**A Personal Dictionary** (4th edition) is available online.



- 2003** **Threshold** self-published.  
**Utopia** : 9 hour chalk performance of a text by E.M. Cioran. Vancouver Canada.  
**Negatextual Resource Centre**: exhibition of negatexts. Studio Blue, Vancouver, Canada.  
excerpts from *Evidence* published in Exile vol.27 (3).  
**Devil's Wine** self-published. **2002** exhibition of **Sublimages** @ Active Pass Pharmaceuticals, Vancouver, Canada  
**Total Domination**, 12 hour chalk performance. Vancouver, Canada  
**A Congregation of Last Moments**: exhibition of new Sublimages. Studio Blue, Vancouver, Canada, Canada
- 2001** **The Grand Inquisitor**, 12 hour chalk performance of the text by Fyodor Dostoyevsky; Vancouver, Canada.  
**Contradiction**, 7 hour chalk performance. Pointless Hysteria, Vancouver, Canada.  
**Dissociative Fugue**, solo show of collage on glass and performance. Pointless Hysteria, Vancouver, Canada.  
selections from *Short Films* in **Young Bloods** (stories from Exile, 1972-2001).
- 2000** **Evidence**, a performance at the Blinding Light in Vancouver, Canada.  
**Opacity Project**, public interventions and performances throughout Vancouver, Canada.  
**Low Tide**, waterfront performance in Vancouver, Canada.  
**Dissociative Fugue** (limited edition of 50) self-published
- 1999** **Purge**, a 10 hour marathon reading encompassing the last 10 years of work, pseudo-work, and literate futilities.  
**Marginotomy**, a solo show of large collage works on glass. The Church of Pointless Hysteria, Vancouver, Canada.  
**Discurse**, a marathon reading series in unlikely public locations. (including *The Loser* by Tomas Bernhard, *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino)
- 1998** **Cipher and Poverty (The Book of Nothing)** published (Ekstasis Editions)  
**The Broken Word** Canadian reading tour  
Solo exhibition **Sublimage**: collage & negatexts with a performance of **Umbilicorium**, Din Studios, Toronto, Canada  
**Absolution** (limited edition of 50) self-published
- 1997** **A Personal Dictionary** (limited edition of 50 copies) self-published (Tonguenail Books)
- 1994** self-published **The House of Misfortune** (Tonguenail Books)  
**Short Films from the Fourteenth Century** published (Exile Editions)  
**a hand for the drowned** published (Ekstasis Editions)
- 1989** - stories and poems appeared in: Dandelion, Exile, paragraph, Canadian Fiction Magazine,  
**1994** Prism, NeWest Review, Grain, The New Quarterly, Poetry Canada Review, Sub-Terrain.

