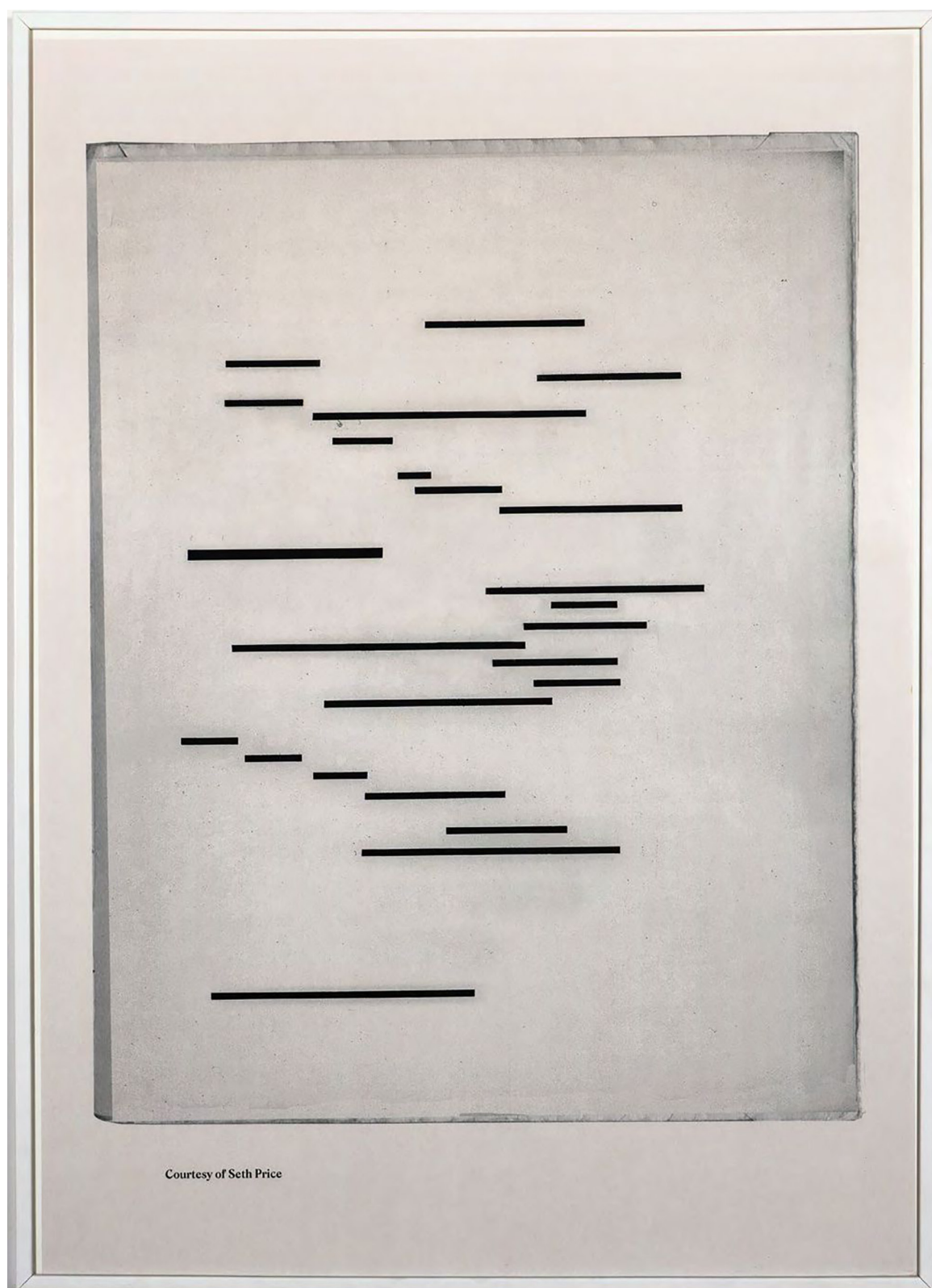


51 - MITIMGAMMA TYPE SPECIMEN



Courtesy of Seth Price

51 - MITIMGAMMA TYPE SPECIMEN

You could argue that sampling poisoned the well. On the other hand, it is true that in homeopathic medicine, and sometimes in magic, you put drop of the bad thing, the thing you fight, into water or some other medium. Sampling may be invasive, negating repetition, disordering us, but then that's the wish of every man, for disorder, for mayhem. You must fight something in order to understand it! Voice sampling, possibly all sampling, gives us a text that is critical of reading.

Graffiti performs a similar operation. The gesture of graffiti must preserve that which it seeks to destroy. Were it to entirely efface its object, its particular critique would vanish. None, after all, is worse shod than the shoemaker's wife. The work of Broodthaers occasionally follows this logic, most clearly in his piece *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, with its pleasantly incestuous abuse of the Francophone avant-garde. The publication of Mallarmé's poem "*Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*," a work distinguished by its typography and disposition of the words upon the page, marked the first time that a poem's conception and meaning were determined through the mechanical printing process. A lyric automation of the design function. In 1969, Broodthaers made a series of pieces that reproduced the exact page layout of Mallarmé's poem, and the layout alone, since he effaced each line of text with a solid black bar. This gesture, while it banished all communicative symbols, retained the striking look and feel of the work. Mallarmé's piece was emptied-out, reduced to seductive packaging. This is a move typical of "appropriation," which may be considered simply an advanced form of packaging.

These depleted forms were engraved onto aluminum plates, as if prepped for mass production, and presented as fine art. Broodthaers claims and then augments Mallarmé's poem to produce a new, third body, a field between the works.

The whole is without novelty, save the spacing of one's reading, the blanks, in effect, assume importance. The madness of the "a self-annihilating nothing" prescription. But this was only to be expected, since Broodthaers was an imitation artist. It may be that the supreme triumph of such advanced art is to cast doubt on its own validity, mixing a deep scandalous laughter with the religious spirit. There's a violence in this turn, the same violence that attends graffiti: Don't think, look!

– "Décor Holes," Seth Price, Dot Dot Dot #13, 2006

Seth Price & Dexter Sinister,
Mitingamma type specimen, 2007,
2 lithographic proof prints, each 105.5 x 76 cm