

“Author of Best-Selling Detective Novels Found Dead”. Someone had slipped the clipping under his office door overnight. The author repudiated a recent english translation of his work. “Humor cannot translate,” he had said. Israel Lund P.I. washed the taste of tequila from his mouth with a swig of black coffee and continued reading. The American publisher planned to release the paperback and ebook editions later this year. *No comment from the translator, Mo Ritter*, he thought, and filed it away. A sequence, a plot, a center struggled to emerge. *A life of crime is given its due only if everything with a history of its own is credited with corruption.*

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When a work of literature appears in translation, it is seldom the same length as the original. There are instances, however, when these calculations, and the experience they must reproduce, are required of the translator. The material conditions of language, such as word count and the use of specific letters, are important considerations; in effect, the translator must adopt some techniques from Sam Korman, a forger of paintings, for whom orientation, proportion, and equipment are predominant considerations.

A translator and a forger are stewards of history, and they are expected to be sensitive to the ever-changing conditions of the present. Ergo, their task may resemble the conversion of language into art. Sol Lewitt’s geometric sculptures and wall drawings, for example, reimagine basic technical instructions and mathematical permutations. Both simple and complicated objects reveal complex negotiations between the two forms of communication. Or the task may resemble Anne Truitt’s sculptures. Color permeates an appreciation of their elementary forms. They privilege neither *a posteriori* nor *a priori* experience.

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Over the past several years, Israel Lund has developed a trademark visual vocabulary, influenced by analog and digital reproduction technologies. Using a printmaking process, Lund prepares a silkscreen to the exact dimensions of a canvas, and, with single passes of a squeegee, he applies one layer of cyan, magenta, and yellow ink, respectively. Screen printing normally reproduces an image exactly. However, Lund exploits the material conditions of this process. Factors such as surface tension affect the interaction between canvas and ink, produce abstract images of brilliant static, and render subtle and nuanced differences from one painting to the next. This description of the creative process does little to resolve the disorienting experience of viewing one or several of the works together. There is no distinction between copy and original by which to value, let alone sequence, the paintings.

Lund hangs the paintings horizontally and vertically, partly determined by the architectural context. This gesture further undermines the artistic intention normally attached to composition. Hence, material and spatial considerations attenuate an authentic viewing experience. Like a digital image file distributed amongst platforms, the paintings are mutated by their surroundings. In effect, they seem to possess a willingness, if not an imperative to connect to the systems that inscribe them. These overlapping situations push the works beyond their creator’s, or viewer’s, control. Attempted aesthetic categorization results in an ecstatic negativity.

The exhibition at the Lumber Room translates musical improvisation: trios trigonometrically expand a theme exponentially. Lund will exhibit three large paintings in the main gallery. In the foyer and back gallery, two group exhibitions will be organized under the name APPLES. They will include: Anne Truitt, Sol Lewitt, and K.r.m. Mooney; an unknown artist, On Kawara, and Christo. Writings by Morgan Ritter, Sam Korman, and John Corbett will accompany the show. Three artworks, three exhibitions, three artists, three texts—the PR emulates the exhibition structure: three sections, 333 words each. Actually, it’s 1,000 words total. Because there’s no such thing as an exact translation.

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How to evaluate the work of the translator? The forger elucidates issues of scale, but he conforms to imitation. Let's forget Korman for now. The bigness of an essay or the smallness of a poem are important benchmarks for translation's verisimilitude. Consider artist, Christo. He wraps buildings or islands with fabric, but a translator must color between the lines. No matter, an originary language is like an irrepressible negative space from which visibility, like surface, takes its form. Christo distills natural disorientation proportionate to this equation: original text plus color.

It might seem, from our perspective, that a translation blithely cartwheels between yesterday and today. On Kawara translated his date paintings into several languages, and he destroyed those that were not finished the same day they had begun. In effect, they map specific moments from the artist's past onto the preoccupations inscribing the present—our sorting of this here, that there. A translator doesn't reproduce history. She sounds out the boundaries from the point at which we stand.

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Everything seemed to be happening as if in the afterlife. Mooney and Uka, former detectives turned true crime bloggers, were in Lund's office. The dwindling twilight streams in through the window and illuminates a nearly empty bottle of tequila on the desk. *Where's the translator?* Mooney stridently demands. Don't get the wrong idea. Between Lund and his colleagues, it's information for ad-space. But all the noise surrounding the translator's whereabouts degraded any image of a motive—it was all static, the murder mutated into a long string of improvised gags and non sequiturs. *Material evidence*, Lund reminded them, *is intimately connected to the phenomenon of crime, without being of importance to it.*

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Lund had read all of the dead author's novels, and was determined to solve the case. Though the translator, central to his investigation, was awol. Night after night, he scrutinized crime scene photographs, which he systematically spread across his desk. The images held the potential to reveal a clue, but his painstaking investigation evolved into paranoia. If he hadn't overlooked anything, then it was possible that the missing translator offered no solution; or, that he no longer belonged to the same reality to which the pictures referred.

The preceding story was excerpted from Mooney and Uka's true crime compendium, printed by Corbett Publishing, who had introduced the late-novelist's titles to english-language audiences.