Simon Evans (1972, London, UK) lives and works in New York with Sarah Lannan (1984, USA), his partner and constant collaborator. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (MUDAM), Luxembourg; Aspen Art Museum; White Columns, New York; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. A travelling two-person exhibition featuring Evans and Öyvind Fahlström was held at Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany. Evans’s work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including at Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; Tate Modern, London; Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany; the 12th Istanbul Biennial; and the 27th São Paulo Biennial.

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Simon Evans obsessively catalogs fragments of the everyday, using modest materials such as found paper scraps, pens, tape, correction fluid, and thread. Though often personal, his works articulate shared conditions, how we all navigate the clamar and complexity of being in the world. The written text is central to Evans’s process, as he imaginatively uses different formats for text, including letters, lists, diagrams, and maps, often contradicting the logic of each. Language is the perfect vehicle for the artist’s neurotic maelstrom of reflexivity; it allows us to express, even as it limits our expression. Facilitates, just as it delineates, our understanding of the world.

Evans’s capacity for language comes through in a distinctive tone, somewhere between invervene and surrender. Quickly jotted musings and bold, declarative typefaces jostle on the dense surfaces of his meticulously pieced-together works. Idiosyncratic systems abound; disorder and non-sensical pairings proliferate. In the large paper weaving Vocabulary (2011), close to 150 objects and symbols, including body parts, corporate logos, and religious emblems, float against an expansive neutral background. A fried egg sits next to the Mac spinning pinwheel; a Mondrian painting is sandwiched between the state of California and lightning bolt. They are simplified, almost pixilated, by the thickness of the warp and weft, and this compression simulates symbolic power: through constant repetition, a simple outline or particular color combination gains deeply embedded meaning. In a preparatory work, Drawing for Vocabulary (2010), the symbols are accompanied by brief, wayward descriptors that reveal the poetic complexity of signs: a file folder icon is a “convention for the organization of experience in time,” a crescent moon stands for the “poronymy of distance very cheap.”

Evans applies a knitter’s mentality to traces and phrases of everyday life, unique and not easily categorized, each requires careful inspection and processing before it can be expunged. For Self Help (2012), Evans collected these fragments in a handheld memo pad as a way of coping with his new environment after moving from Berlin to New York. The pages contain lists, diagrams, and direct statements, which explore his anxieties, ambivalence, and fears. The diaristic impulse is nowhere clearer than in Evans’s pyramidal sculpture Monument to Sun Related Events (2008), an assembly of memories that reads like a stream of consciousness. Ranging over vague feelings (“emptiness of summer”); and clear impressions (“Lying on my belly in the grail of the roof”). Though many of the moments seem trivial, and some sad, the act of assembling them into a ‘monument’ suggests that they are all valuable, all connected. Feelings T-Shirt (2010) also stands as a record of the lived: a simple white t-shirt that over time became covered in sweat marks and stains, traces of Evans’s bodily activities. In place of an identity-affirming brand, the word “FEELINGS” is hand-embroidered across the chest, and, in a museological white frame, the shirt becomes a relic or artifact.

It’s no surprise that Evans is tuned in to Susan Stewart’s book The Voice (2010) appears to identify real and imagined obstacles for personal happiness on an apartment schematic (the address in the bottom right corner is that of Evans’s previous dwelling in Berlin). Shifty Heaven (2010) imagines the afterlife as a planned suburban community, illustrating 13 delineated spaces, including a gym, indoor shopping, and a museum, each filled with a variety of symbolic, absurd, and mundane objects. Exploring the psychosocial complexities of these environments, Shifty Heaven points to a deeper anxiety about cultural values and “goodness.” It’s as if naming and relating these obsessions allows them to be both analyzed and mythologized.

It’s not only Evans’s maps that project volume from a 2D makeup; though decisively flat, his works tend to be fantastically spatial. To scour their surfaces, to receive their messages, is to be absorbed in networks of visibility, replete with fields, boundaries, and nooks. Though Evans’s favored technique of layering with paper and tape gives texture and transparency, these strata actually emphasize flatness. Weaving, though visibly structured, is infinitely planar. Even the sculptural works are more about surface than volume: the celestial globe A Yearning Heart (2009) presents fragile terrain like luminous, pox-marked skin. Monument for Sun Related Events suggests its own assembly from a tab-and-fold template, and it’s telling that the artist’s first tapestry work, Letter to the Future (2011), actually depicts a piece of paper. Evans’s flatness is labored. Rather than surfaces that accept, these are surfaces that control, and this constitutes precisely what shapes their work.

A new work created for this exhibition, Existing Models of Escape (2013), expands onto architecture. Twenty pieces of paper fill the interior passage of the Museum’s monumental stair like parts of a disassembled poem, proposing alternative, and at times desperate, signage. Through phrases that are just as much about giving way as finding it, Evans presents human foibles and modes for distortion and avoidance: “Mask fear with good taste,” says one, “Look at the various styled human hair on busy trains.” While opening yourself up to cultural codification, “if you experience the terror of history have a sandwich in the museum cafe.” Evans’s signs, somewhere between declarative statements and personal notes, are akin to Jenny Holzer’s Truisms (1978–1983), or the late Scottish poet Iain Cuthler’s Stickies, which he passed out to strangers and described as “feeble attempts to deal with the need to reassess how to relate.”

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1 Others that have made use of the collage book come to mind, particularly works from the 1960s by French artist Denise A. Aubertin, and the psychogeographic memoirs (1959) by Ager Jern and Gør Danielsen.

2 Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Corporeal (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 139.

3 headphones; and moving to a cell in the museum cafe.” Evans’s signs, somewhere between declarative statements and personal notes, are akin to Jenny Holzer’s Truisms (1978–1983), or the late Scottish poet Iain Cuthler’s Stickies, which he passed out to strangers and described as “feeble attempts to deal with the need to reassess how to relate.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shifty Heaven, 2010</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper, tape, pen, 11 3/4 x 9 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York/Shanghai</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>They, 2012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper, tape, 5 x 31 1/2 x 31 1/2 each</td>
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<td><strong>Self Help, 2012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed media, 21 pieces, 5 x 3 inches each</td>
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<td>Collection of Marguerite Steed Hoffman</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Models of Escape, 2013</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed media, tape and paper, Pixiglas, 20 pieces, 11 x 8 1/2 inches each</td>
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1 Drawing for Vocabulary, 2010  
2 Pen, paper, tape, 23 1/4 x 28 inches  
3 Collection of Nancy and Joachim Bechtel  
4 Monument for Sun Related Events, 2008  
5 Paper, ball point pen, 28 1/2 x 20 x 20 inches  
6 Collection of Jennifer and John Eagle  
7 Home County, 2008-9  
8 Paper weaving, 42 3/4 x 54 9/16 inches  
9 Collection of Nancy and Robert Magoon  

**A Yearning Heart, 2009**  
Correction fluid, tape, pen, paper, wood, metal  
13 1/9 x 9 1/2 inches  

**Survival, 2009**  
Paper, tape, felt-tip pen, pencil  
27 1/2 x 39 5/8 inches  

**The Voice, 2010**  
Mixed media, 44 inches diameter  

**Feelings T-Shirt, 2010**  
Embroidered t-shirt  
27 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches  

**Letter to the Future, 2011**  
Hand-embroidered  
11 3/4 x 11 3/4 inches  

**Rhyming Opportunities, 2011**  
Paper weaving  
45 1/4 x 29 3/8 inches  

**Vocabulary, 2011**  
Paper weaving  
73 3/4 x 56 1/2 inches  

**Drawing for Vocabulary, 2010**  
Pen, paper, colored pencil  
18 x 13 1/4 inches  

**Collection of Albert Sanford and Dorothy Wildman**  
**Escape and Rescue Plan, 2008**  
Pen, paper, correction fluid  
23 1/4 x 28 inches  

**Collection of Nancy and Joachim Bechtel**  
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