

mahan gallery

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press release

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mahan gallery opens exhibition, morally ambiguous, recent works by heather willems, september 24 – 29, reception, saturday, september 24, 6-10pm.

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artist taps phone lines to collect personal information.

artist heather willems collects and displays the intimate details of people's lives using text as a visual image. with this selected work she collects information by eavesdropping in bars and restaurants, transcribing overheard cell phone conversations, tapping her own landline, and intercepting unsent letters.

willems utilizes writing as a visual medium and personal narrative as subject matter. she paints brightly colored text in the form of common visual images: a 1982 television set or ford taurus station wagon. in other instances the text is presented in its original form: scrawled on bar napkins or as telephone answering machine recordings. from a distance the work appears light hearted in nature but in reading the content, the pieces have a collective darkness. in *drive-by*, a mother describes her affair as she stalks her lover's house. in *the avenger*, ex-gang member describes the revenge he plots against his girlfriend's murderer. the work exhibits personal experiences but taps into shared fears and desires.

a native to green bay, wisconsin, heather willems currently lives and works in columbus, ohio. she received a bfa (2000) in photography from the university of minnesota-twin cities and an mfa (2005) from ohio state university. willems has exhibited heavily in the mid-west and throughout the u.s.

the mahan gallery focuses on emerging and mid-career artists working in a variety of media, including painting, photography, and sculpture. gallery hours are tuesday -saturday 11am - 5pm or by appointment.