

# Verbatim

**Robert Bean**

*NSCAD University of the Arts*

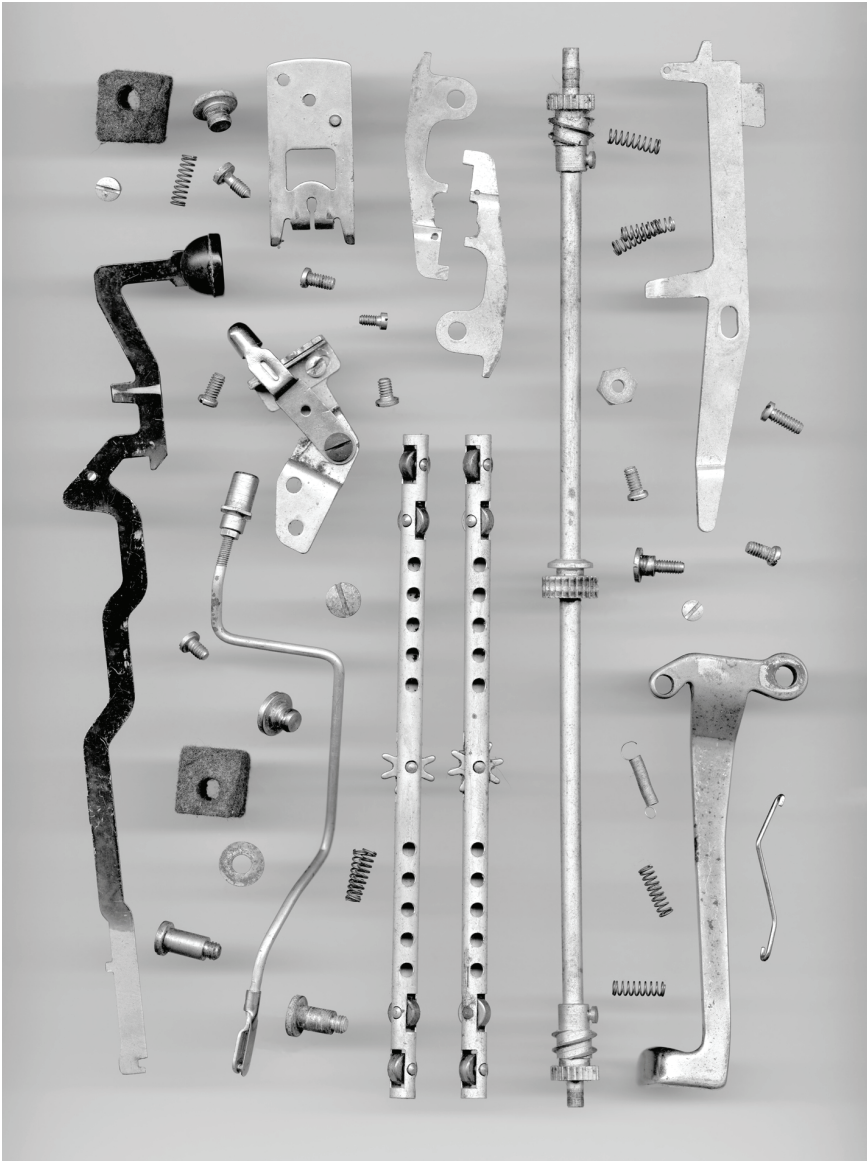


Typefan 1

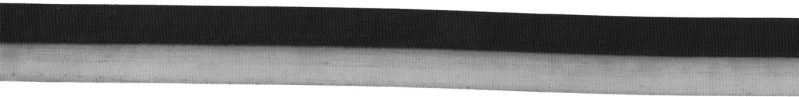
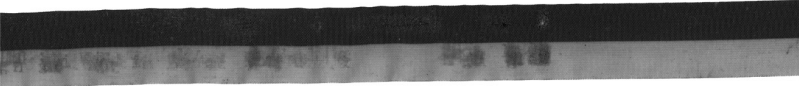
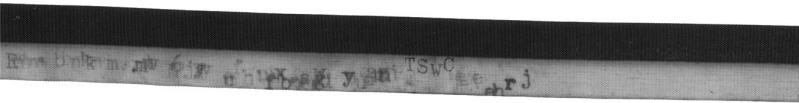
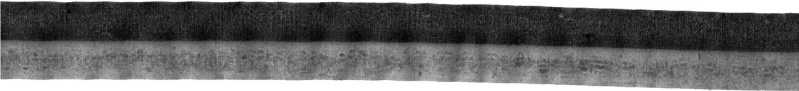
Artifacts become knowable in part because they are enmeshed within the back and forth and round about of telling what they are, and because telling devolves upon discernable rhetorical conventions, like genres and specialized vocabularies, that are themselves largely the result of unconscious consensus.<sup>1</sup>

The sites and subjects that I explore consider the temporal uncertainty that photographs evoke in relation to memory, technology and experience. The exhibition “Verbatim” is comprised of digital images made with a flatbed scanner. The prints are “contact images” that remember and forget the earlier technological processes of photography and typewriting. Photography, typing, and phonographic writing (stenographer’s shorthand) are all historically associated with the technologies of verbatim inscription. The history and memory of our embodied relationship to these technologies is essential to the human-computer interface of contemporary digital technologies. “Verbatim” reconsiders the development of language machines and the subsequent systems of storage and retrieval.

In 1997 I dismantled a manual typewriter. The physical contact with the object was used as a procedure for remembering an obsolete technology that has influenced and predated my experience. The cultural complexity of the apparatus, its design, function, and mechanical precision were conveyed through this process of disassembly. The labour that fabricated and implemented the writing machine was also revealed. Since that time, I have been reassembling the artifacts of this experience as digital images. The mechanical artifacts are texts and stories that may be transcribed and retold. As Lisa Gitelman has noted, “[n]ew inscriptions signal new subjectivities”.<sup>2</sup>



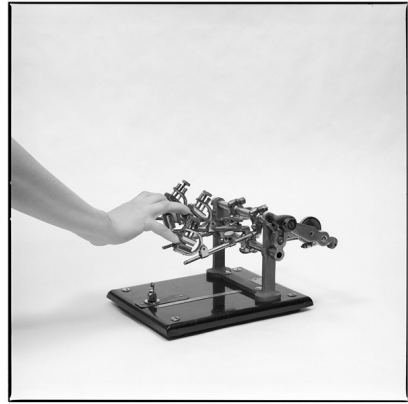
Parts 10



Ribbon #2



Steno 2b



Steno-Hand