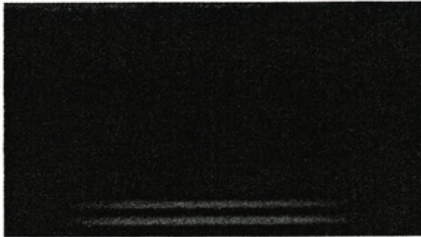


**The Microwave. Cristinerose/  
Josée Bienvenu.**

An obsessive current ran through “The Microwave,” a group show at the Cristinerose/Josée Bienvenu gallery this fall. The exhibition claimed to document “the extinction of words: erasing logos,” yet words and logos were never rendered extinct. Rather, their original significances faded over time and were absorbed into the artwork, only to reemerge as purely visual symbols. *Static* (2002), by Stephen Sollins,



Stefana McClure, *La Grande Illusion: English subtitles to a film by Jean Renoir*, graphite transfer paper mounted on rag (7-1/2 x 9-3/4 in.), 2002. Courtesy Cristinerose/Josée Bienvenu.

appeared to be a large, empty spreadsheet. In fact, the artist meticulously applied correction fluid to the *New York Times* television listings, voiding the information but leaving the grid intact. Elena del Rivero’s *Letter to the Mother* (1995) consists of fifty pages filled with the word “mother” written over and over again in a careful script with a quill pen; the writing started out clear and then gradually lightened to near invisibility as the artist ran out of ink.

Even the artworks that did not utilize text had a compulsive energy that became a lan-

guage of its own. Two drawings by Jacob El Hanani, *Script* (1998) and *NOF 98* (1998), filled the page with dense ink markings that, in the case of *Script*, resembled pointillism, or, in *NOF 98*, seemed to be woven into a tweed. Marco Maggi’s *Fast Viewer* (2002) employed tiny lines in pencil to create a pseudo-architectural drawing of what looked like mechanical parts that splayed uselessly across the page. Maggi’s terrific sculptural work in the center of the gallery, *Hotbed (9-02)* (2002), consisted of seventy-eight stacks of typing paper, each about 2-1/4 in. tall, with a delicate construction cut out of the top sheets.

Three works by Stefana McClure possessed a Zen-like stillness that served as a counterpoint to all this obsession. Her work also utilized a concentrated gesture—though this time the repetition rendered it invisible. McClure wrote the complete subtitles for movies on Japanese wax transfer paper, then erased them; as the top layer of wax was removed, different colors emerged from the paper. *Breaking the Waves: Japanese subtitles to a film by Lars Von Triers* (2002) was a velvety black with two luminous horizontal lines toward the bottom of the page—the lower line a lapis lazuli, and the top one a rose quartz. Through multiple translations, the screenplay became a purely visual language of atmospheric beauty.

—*Claire Barliant*