

*The final words of Goethe
appear in Braille
on a large window
at certain times of the day
when the sun
comes through
the words can be seen
in shadow
on the floor
moving from the front to the back of the room
in diminishing focus.*

BETH KA-MAN LAU

“Enciphered messages in Braille is a recurring motive throughout my three-year art practice. The installation **MORE LIGHT!** (2012) has transformed the literary meaning that operates on the perception between visibility and invisibility. By transcribing a selected phrase from Goethe’s last words in Braille, this site-specific work on a window evokes both the poet’s presence and his absence, as well as connotations of the enlightenment, and limitations of literacy.

It is very important to me to understand Goethe’s phrase in two contradictory ways. While it is commonly interpreted as “Open the blinds of the bedroom so that more light may enter”, suggesting the nature of light and time before death, I feel a significant alternative meaning, one that implies the weight of life before it ends – light as an opposite to “heavy”.

The work itself is a form of failure in communication, the endurance of non-accessibility in the realm of language and the frustration of (mis)interpretation. Neither sighted individuals, who can see the Braille signs, but cannot read them, nor blind individuals, who can understand Braille, yet who cannot see the dots or their shadows, will be able to read Goethe’s words.

The five aluminum blinds appear to be the “loading bar” of computers, with embossed icons inspired by Microsoft Windows™, the unforgettable hourglass. This resembles ASCII art derived from obsolete computer aesthetics. In addition, the work challenges traditional printmaking, as the Braille is produced from a manual Perkin Brailier, often used in Braille-making on paper - instead of the metal sheets here.

The collective space of transformation conflates the three tenses and times of memory, since the work not only fulfills its visibility depending on time and the volume of light, but the perception of the work also depends on climatic conditions. Even when it rains, the raindrops that settle on the glass seem to embrace the Braille dots. It seeks to foresee somewhere we do not see, *no longer see, or do not yet see.*”

Beth Ka-Man Lau, born Hong Kong 1989, who is graduated from Goldsmiths College, University of London in 2012. She is widely working in Europe among Helsinki, Paris and London, with recent shows *Áit* (Hackney Wick, London) and *Now I Can Live* (HFBK, Hamburg). She likes feeling anything with strange texture.