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Joseph Grigely – *Even If You Can't Hear*

January 29 – March 17, 2016
Opening: January 28, 2016, 6–8pm

Galerie Francesca Pia is pleased to present *Even if You Can't Hear*, Joseph Grigely's first solo exhibition in Zurich and his first with the gallery since 2003.

Grigely's work interrogates relational practices along the lines of verbal and non-visual communication, examining the conditions, occasions and circumstances of human interaction through the staging of everyday conversations, whether serious, phatic, banal or humorous, in wall works, prints and sculptural objects. The show at Galerie Francesca Pia consists of wall pieces, a set of prints titled *Songs from St Cecilia*, and a cast crystal-urethane stove from an ice-fishing shack. Grigely's sculptures often develop through observing how sound changes and influences the space of the social, or is altered by a particular type of space, where a fishing stove can be the prompt for or site of certain types of song, or a urethane rendering of a dog from a Canaletto painting can turn all heads towards its bark.

Grigely's *Conversation Pieces* are wall works made with the notes and notepapers left over from conversations the artist, who is deaf, has had with people who don't use sign language. The large wall work, *Even if You Can't Hear*, 2016, shows fragments of these conversations from an archive of over ten thousand individual texts gathered in the last fifteen years, arranged together in a grid. *Songs from St Cecilia* notate the new words of popular songs, as lip mis-read and re-transcribed as part of the production of a video of the same name. The songs, *Silent Night*, *Holy Night*, *My Favorite Things* and *Jolly Old Saint Nicholas* become *Cy Licks Light*, *Holy Fright*, *The Czar is Afraid of Everything* and *Check Close Those Lucky Legs* respectively. The lyrics are also rewritten with the misread words, rendering "Christmas Eve is coming soon" as "Reevy Stevens coughs up blue," or "Cream colored ponies and crisp apple strudels" as "Creamy exponents and newspapers too."

The gridded note works, the sheet of musical notation and even the ruled notepaper of *Untitled Conversations (Men Are Assholes)* provide structures that both sustain types of human error and give form to varieties of understanding; in them Grigely documents what could be forgotten, an archive of the everyday or of conversations that are, as all conversations, rife with opportunities to go wrong and yet also at times, brilliantly and unexpectedly, go right.

Grigely was born in 1956 in Massachusetts and lives and works in Chicago. His archive of the American art historian and critic, *The Gregory Battcock Archive*, shown at the 2014 Whitney Biennial, is currently on view in the Grazer Kunstverein, Graz. In an ongoing project that began in 1996, he has overseen the archive of publications and publication projects by the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist. Grigely's work has been shown in the 2000 Whitney Biennial, New York, the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Baltimore Contemporary Museum and the Fondation Joan Miró, Barcelona.