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## Reading Between the Lines of Mel Bochner's Verbose Monoprints

ARTSY EDITORIAL  
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NOV 3RD, 2015 10:01 PM



Image courtesy of Two Palms.

Among the works for which pioneering conceptual artist Mel Bochner is known are his lush, textured paintings that burst with words. Made with the help of one of his favored tools, Roget's *Thesaurus*, these paintings feature a single word spun out into its synonyms. In collaboration with Two Palms, the artist translates these works from canvas to paper, producing vibrant monoprints, which can be seen this week at the IFPDA Print Fair in New York.



Mel Bochner  
*Right On!*, 2015  
Two Palms  
\$45,000

Like the paintings from which they derive, Bochner's prints are big. To stand in front of them is to be faced with a field of words. They march across these prints, spelled out in bold capital letters with rounded edges and executed in a brilliant assortment of pigments.



Mel Bochner coloring paper. Image courtesy Two Palms.

As with his paintings, the monoprints are realized through oil paint, slathered on in thick layers. To make these works, deeply carved Plexiglas plates are filled with paint, the surface is covered with paper, and a hydraulic press applies 750 tons of pressure, thus transferring the marks on the plate to soft-yet-durable sheets of handmade paper. This process results in works with surfaces so rich and tactile that they read almost as sculptural reliefs and entice touch.

One of the words that the artist worked with for these monoprints is "money." It kicks off a cascade of synonyms and slang, appearing at the upper left corner of a work titled (appropriately) *Money* (2015). A blotch of dark paint slightly obscures the letters "E" and "Y," as if to remind us that this is about looking as much as it is about reading. Among the words that follow, in varicolored letters ranging from black to crimson to sky blue, are: "moola," "shekels," "cheddar," and "root of all evil."



Left: Mel Bochner mixing paints. Right: Inking the monoprint plate. Images courtesy of Two Palms.