GOLD CODE SERIES
ARTIST’S STATEMENT

Vagner M. Whitehead

Utilizing time-based and traditional media in my art practice, I often employ original, appropriated, and researched multi-lingual texts, found and created photo-based imagery in my creative practice. Their presentation, coupled with my own translations and interpretations, operate as allegorical signs that reframe trans-cultural experiences. My concepts usually drive the form/medium in which my artworks take shape, but in this case the context, a busy street corner, dictated the end result. Billboards are traditional venues for advertising that quickly communicate with a transient audience. They pose a similar challenge to the time spent looking at art in a gallery setting (a few seconds on the average): how to relay a message. Instead of giving in to this problem with a straight-forward solution, I decided to create a piece that would provide purposeful difficulty in conveying meaning at a first glance, by combining the representation of three communication modes: American Sign Language, Morse, and Braille. The gold code series, which features billboards, prints, garments, iPhone covers and other merchandise, explores the codified nature of art and meaning, and their intersections with commerce and the public arena.