26 Alphabets

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26 Alphabets
(for Sol LeWitt)

derek beaulieu, editor

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My own creative practice encompasses both visual poetry and conceptual writing. As the discussion around conceptual writing develops, I am intrigued by the line between these two genres and how they may intersect.

26 Alphabets (for Sol LeWitt) is the third project of this type I have edited. For each of the first two volumes, *Simplex 17* (2007) and *Lego 50-15* (2008), I presented a group or artists, poets and writers with a constrained vocabulary (a single sheet of dry-transfer lettering and the original patent for Lego, respectively) and requested they create a product using only the materials provided. I afforded room within the completed collections for every received piece with no editorial interference.

My task as editor was simply to approach a series of potential contributors with a set of instructions and then gather the responses.

With this pair of instruction- and constraint-based collections completed, I felt it appropriate that I turn my focus towards Sol LeWitt's instruction-based conceptual artwork.

Sol LeWitt, in his "Sentences on Conceptual Art"—thirty-five sentences which operate both as a manifesto and as a piece of conceptual art in their own right—postulates that

> 28. Once the idea of the piece is established in the artist's mind and the final form is decided, the process is carried out blindly. […]

> 29. The process is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course.

This shared processual base for conceptual art and conceptual writing is not to suggest that conceptual writing is a temporally-displaced adjunct to conceptual art, but instead that the two can be seen to share æsthetic values, and that conceptual art can be understood as a moment of Oulipian "anticipatory plagiary."

LeWitt's statements on mechanical procedurality are also vital for conceptual writing, as "[t]o work with a plan which is pre-set is one way of avoiding subjectivity".

Materiality here is not one of humanist poetic—'the stuff of poetry'—but rather one that is developed through the sheer mass of the extraordinary ordinary.

— derek beaulieu

contributors

Gareth Jenkins

Lorenzo Menoud

Oana Avasilichioaei

Helen Hajnoczky

Robert Fitterman

Donato Mancini

Gregory Betts

Jonathan Ball

Nico Vassilakis

Mark Laliberte

Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

Christian Bök

Harold Abramowitz

Johanna Drucker

Giles Goodland

Ross Priddle

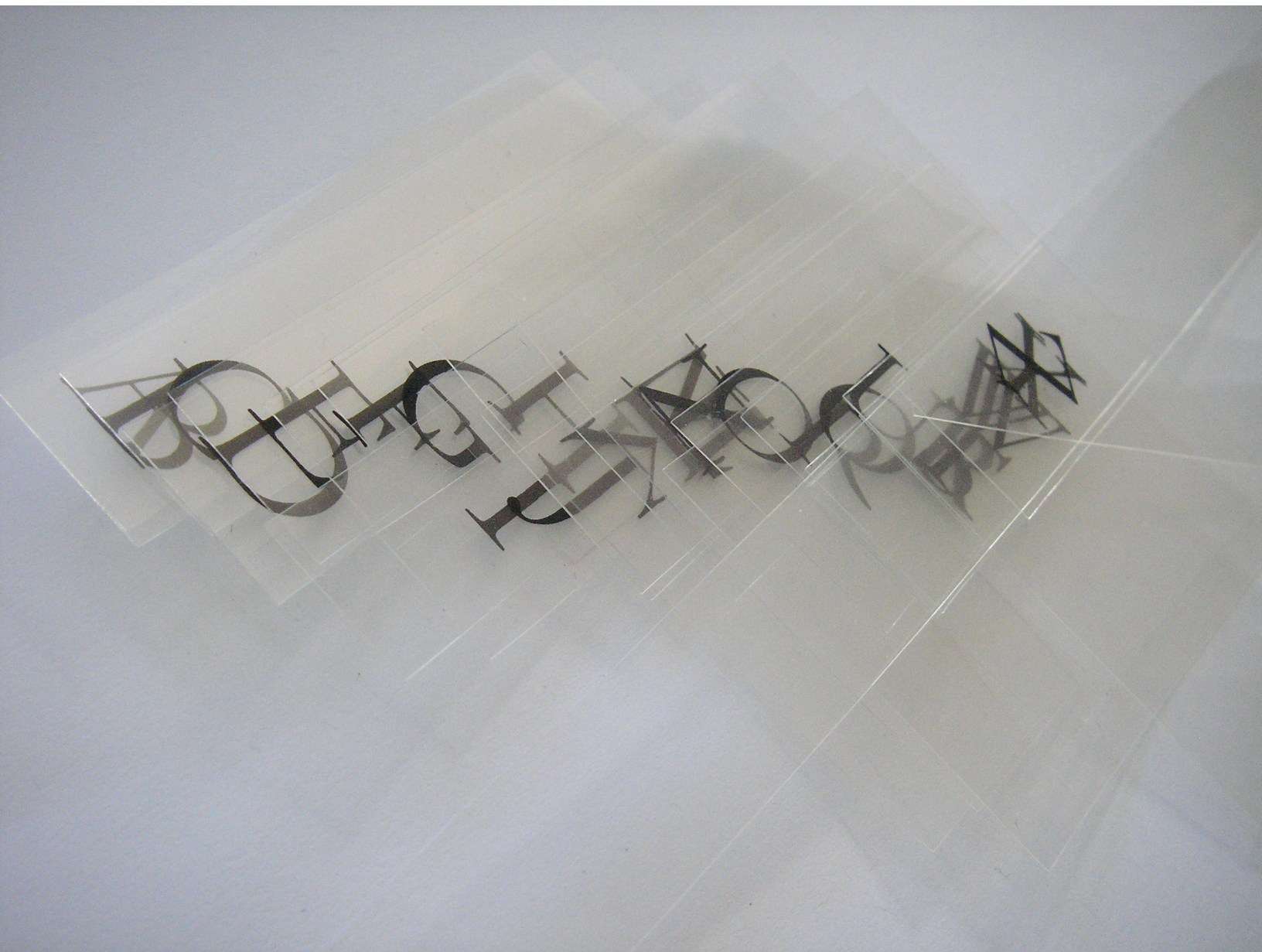Gitte Broeng

John Bennett

Crag Hill

Peter Ganick

Jeff Hilson

Peter Jaeger

Nick Thurston

Stephen McLaughlin

Kjetil Røed

kevin mcpherson eckhoff

ABCÉDER v. intr.

ABCDEFG
HIJKLMN
OPQRSTU
-VWXYZ-

No Q

Hi **f**olks;
in response to the wor**k** of Sol **L**eWitt,

this is **a** pro**j**ect **i**nvitation:

*
On a single sheet of paper
in letters appro**x**imatel**y** one **h**alf inch tall
write the alpha**b**et
from A to **Z**
*

send fi**n**ished pie**C**es to

derek beauli**e**u
2 - 733 2nd a**V**en**U**e nw
cal**g**ary alberta
canada **T**2N 0E4

by Dece**m**ber 31st, 2008.

All **p**ieces will be published in a limited edition
(with 2 copies to every contributo**r**) **S**pring 2009.

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AZ BY CX DW EV FU
BA CZ DY EX FW GU
CB DA EZ FY GX HY
DC EB FA GZ HY IX
ED FC GB HA IZ JY
FE GD HC IB JA KX
GF HE ID JC KB LA
HG IF JE KD LC MB
IH JG KF LE MD NC
JI KH LG MF NE OD
KJ LI MH NG OF PC
LK ML NI OH PG QR
ML NK OL PI QH RS
NM ON PL QK RI ST
ON PO QP RL SK TU
PO QP RS TU UV
QP RS ST UV VW
RQ SR TS UT VW WX
SR TS UT VW WX XY
TS UT VW WX XY YZ
UT VW WX XY YZ ZA
VW WX XY YZ ZA AB
WV XW YX ZY AX BC
XW YX ZY AX BC CD
YX ZY AX BW CV DU E
ZY YX AX BW CV DU E
```

A B C D E

F G H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

In this sentence we find every letter of the alphabet, a system whose jumbled combinations fail to express the *empty word*—zero symbols—this dark question at the heart of our language, an invisible epsilon.

Jonathan Ball
the empty word

COMMERCIAL SCRIPT BT

. A B C D E F

G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T

U V W X Y Z ;

A a Á á Ä ä Å å À à
Ã ã Â â B b Ƀ ƀ C c
Ç ç Č č D d Ð ð E e
É é È è Ê ê Ë ë F f

G g H h I i Í í Ì ì
Î î Ï ï J j K k L l
M m N n Ñ ñ O o Ó ó
Ò ò Ô ô Õ õ P p Q q

R r S s Š š Ś ś ß β
T t U u Ú ú Ù ù Û û
Ü ü W w V v Ǎ ǎ X x

Y y Ÿ ÿ Ý ý Z z Ž ž
Þ þ Æ æ Œ œ Ö ö Ø ø
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

JOG VERB

QI KLUTZ

FAD CWM

SPHYNX

a-anneict, b-bonirg, c-citesrn, d-dumb, e-egg, f-falt, g-going, h-hot, i-intnsee, j-jsout, k-kite, l-leosr, m-mroning, n-ncie, o-oaffl, p-psuproe, q-qeeun, r-risk, s-sat, t-tmie, u-uivnaserl, v-vbeirtam, w-wlid, x-erxta, y-yes, z-

A B C D E F

G H I J K

L M N O P Q

R S T U V

W X Y Z

- apple juice
- BREAD.
- Cornflakes
- dental floss
- eggs
- frozen fish
- Gravy Gran.
- hand soap
- Icecream
- Jam
- kaban
- Lemon Juice
- Milk
- Nivea Soft
- OJuice
- Parsley
- Quiche
- – RADIO TIMES
- Soup.
- TV MAG
- unsalted butter
- vanilla essence
- washing-up bowl
- Xmas Cake
- yogurt
- Zero Coke.
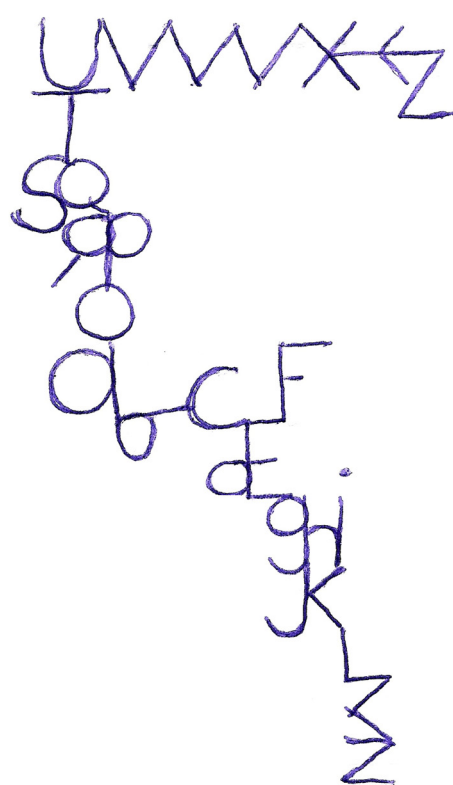
A P C B E F G H I J K

L M N O P Q R S T U
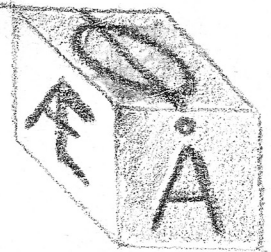
V W X Y Z

A B C D @ F G H I
J K L M N O P Q U
R S T U V W X Y Z

John M. Bennett   2009

U V W X Z

S O O O O

b C F

d

g i

j

k

N

ABCDEFGHI

ИOPQRSTUVWXYZ

JKIHGFEDCBA

JKLMNOPQRST

UVWXYZ.

P Ganick

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

A B C D E

F G H I J

K L M N O

P Q R S T

U V W X Y

Z

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST
UVWXYZ abcdefghij klmnopq
rstuvwxyz

Stephen
McLaughlin
Rotterdam, 2009

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWX
YZ

ÆØÅ

the alphabet
from A to Z