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derek beaulieu

transcend transcribe transfigure transform transgress

derek beaulieu

if poetry is going to reclaim even a shred of relevancy for a contemporary audience then poets must become competitive for your readership and viewership as graphic design advertising and contemporary design culture expand to redefine and rewrite how we understand communication poetry has become ruefully ensconced in the traditional if as brion gysin argued **writing is fifty years behind painting** then poetry is even further behind contemporary design the vast majority of poets are trapped in the 20th (if not the 19th) century hopelessly reiterating tired tropes mcdonalds golden arches the nike swoosh and the apple logo best represent the contemporary descendants of the modernist poem poet lew welch famously wrote raids ubiquitous advertising slogan **raid kills bugs dead** as a copywriter at advertising firm foote cone and belding in 1966 los angeles-based poet vanessa place argues that

today we are of an age that understands corporations are people too and poetry is the stuff of placards. or vice versa.

the stuff of poetry—craftsmanship and handiwork—as opposed to the industry of advertising and business relegates poetry to a role out of touch with the driving economies of the culture advertisers and graphic designers use the fragments of language to fully realize emotional social and political means—and in doing so have left poets with only the most rudimentary tools in doing the same concrete poetry—the 20th centurys

first truly international poetic form—was founded in the late 1950s by a cadre of poets who were captivated by the blending of modernist poetic tropes with the cool efficient use of language found in contemporary advertising campaigns these early efforts reek of a controlled **mad men** aesthetic like the patriarchal androcentric environment of amcs drama concrete poetry was dominated by key personalities who issued manifestos and decrees and reveled in san-serif explorations of the evocative nature of type (much as this essay is reproduced in futura and echoes hansjorg mayers idiosyncratic typography) kenneth goldsmith founder of **ubuweb** the premiere online repository of the avant-garde argues that

early concrete poems are rarely illusionistic; instead, unadorned sans-serif^o language inhabits the plane of the white page.

goldsmith continues evoking art critic clement greenberg and describes the aesthetic of concrete poetry in the 1950s:

as greenberg says, “[the] shapes flatten and spread in the dense, two-dimensional atmosphere.” in doing so, the emotional temperature is intentionally kept cool, controlled and rational.

discussion and criticism of concrete poetry continues to center on male figures like eugen gomringer hansjorg mayer haroldo and augusto de campos decio pignatari all of whose personalities and practices dominate the discourse—suggesting that women were relegated to minor or merely occasional roles there are notable exemptions to this male dominance

the most exemplary early female concrete poet is mary ellen solt solt is best known as editor of **concrete poetry: a world view** (1968) a major international anthology of concrete poetry and related poetic statements solts **flowers in concrete** (1966) **the peoplemover1968: a demonstration poem** (1978) and **marriage: a code poem** (1976) assert her voice as antonio besa argues

not by simply emulating [her male counterparts], but by bringing up themes and concerns close to her own life: the flowers in her garden [...] her husband [...] and her children.

but the themes and concerns that besa asserts sadly seem to reify sexist gender roles relegating women to the subjects of flowers spousal dedication and child-rearing concrete poet haroldo de campos posited concrete poetry as **a notion of literature not as craftsmanship but [...] as an industrial process** where the poem is a **prototype** rather than the **typical handiwork of artistic artistry** this formulation categorizes solts work as **craftsmanship** and **handiwork** isolate from the **industry** of male concrete poets tellingly only 4 of the 80 contributors to **concrete poetry: a world view** are women including solt

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contemporary concrete poets fiona banner jen bervin and erica baum work against the traditional notions of feminine writing and trouble the line between craftsmanship handiwork and industry on friday october 11

2012 patrons of denvers museum of contemporary art attended a moment of sartorial calm before the weekends festivities began—the vernissage of **postscript: writing after conceptual art** the largest exhibit ever staged at the MCA **postscript: writing after conceptual art** was the first major exhibition of conceptual writing—the 21st centurys first truly international poetic form—and text-based art and included internationally-renowned text artists and writers building upon the tenets and dicta of conceptual art and concrete poetry that evening patrons and members of the MCA were granted a private early viewing of **postscript: writing after conceptual art** (which is touring to torontos illustrious power plant contemporary art gallery in 2013 and michigan state universitys prestigious eli and edythe broad art museum in 2014) a few pieces were still being unpacked and the final touches were being placed on the installation but the feeling in the air was one of expectation and excitement curators andrea andersson and nora burnett abrams contextualized the exhibition explained their curatorial mandate and hosted a guided tour punctuated by impromptu presentations by several participants in the exhibition as andersson and abrams guided us through the exhibition guests had their first opportunity to see exemplary work by fiona banner jen bervin and erica baum turner prize nominee fiona banner aided by several assistants was still constructing her epic **1066** and thus took only a moment away from the exhausting process

to speak to the eager audience **1066** builds upon banners previous texts **top gun** (1993) and **the nam** pieces she considers **still-films** **top gun** now in the tate moderns permanent collection is a handwritten subjective account of the cinematic action in the tom cruise film of the same name **the nam** (published in a now exceedingly-rare edition by frith street books in 1997 but thankfully excerpted in craig dworkin and kenneth goldsmiths **against expression: an anthology of conceptual writing**) extends banners textual practice by subjectively describing the action of several hollywood films about the vietnam war over the course of a thousand pages banner writes through **apocalypse now the deer hunter hamburger hill full metal jacket born on the fourth of july** and **platoon** creating an inundation of description:

they haul him up off the bed, hook him up. "c'mon captain, let's take a shower!" he's heavy like a corpse. they talk him along, "c'mon captain, mind how you go," the merest hint of amusement in their voices. the officer says, "just stand him underneath this tap." he turns it on, a jet of water spurts down onto willard. he screams out, like it really hurts. but it turns into, is nothing compared to, the continuous beat of helicopter blades, wiping like crazy and coming down onto you.

the text continues unabated creating in fiona banners description **a tracing rather than a re-presentation** with **1066** banner shifts her gaze from hollywood depictions of the vietnam war to an 11th century depiction

of the battle of hasting the bayeux tapestry is a 230-foot long embroidered depiction of events leading up to the norman conquest of england and thus fits well within banners ongoing engagement with the weapons and depictions of war **1066** like banners **top gun** and **the nam** consists entirely of textual description of the action depicted in another media in this case the medieval embroidery of the bayeux tapestry much as john cage wrote through other authors texts creating new compositions banners writing-through of the bayeux tapestry—a veritable **still film** in and of itself—creates a new text by pointing and selecting banner and her assistants painted every letter in **1066** in a rough-hewn italic typeface that echoes the invading and repelling lean of english and french forces across the tapestrys depicted landscape the overwritten palimpsest foregrounds the act of writing through the processual act of constant re-creation that comes with reading and looking charles dickens sniffed at the bayeux tapestry as

certainly the work of amateurs; very feeble amateurs at the beginning and very heedless some of them too.

today the bayeux tapestry is widely studied reproduced and considered by comic book theorist scott mccloud as one of the earliest european examples of sequential art and as such as a forerunner of the modern comic book the scrolls captions in english-inflected latin provide textual context for

contemporary viewers much as comic book caption boxes or motion picture title cards:

HIC VVILLELM DUX ALLOQUITUR SUIS MILITIBUS UT PREPARARENT SE VIRILITER

ET SAPIENTER AD PRELIUM CONTRA ANGLORUM EXERCITUM / HIC

CECIDERUNT LEVVINE ET GYRTD FRATRES HAROLDI REGIS

[here duke william speaks to his knights to prepare themselves manfully and wisely for the battle against the army of the english / here fell dead leofwine and gyrrh, brothers of king harold]

eschewing the propaganda of the original scroll banners **tracing rather than a re-presentation** is both intimate and monumental one of the main tenets of conceptual writing is the act of selection; here banner asserts transcription and textual tracing as writerly acts the original tapestry displays similar acts of pointing (**here duke william... here fell dead...**) presented in a highly personalized form—every figure every piece of text is sewn by hand lending an importance to every gesture depicted banners depiction of the bayeux tapestry is also an act of pointing: she decides which figures to describe which actions to relate and what language to use:

the guy's down on the ground, arrow in the side of his face. another takes one in the hand, cries like a beast as he pulls it out.

banners account of the images on the tapestry also suggest her **arsewoman in wonderland** (2001) in which she screen-printed a billboard-sized description of porn actors performances in the film of the same name

every bead of sweat every spasm of muscle every time an actor **crie[d] like a beast** is textually represented banners description engages directly with the action depicted not as captioning but as a subjective description of events **1066** confronts the categorization of both handwriting and embroidery as craftsmanship and handiwork banner implicates both into the most industrious of economies—the military

jen bervin—another contributor to **postscript: writing after conceptual art**—came to literary prominence with **nets** (2004) in which she erases the majority of the words in shakespeare's sonnets in order to create fragile poems of beautiful telegraph-like brevity from the remains shakespeare's 2nd sonnet is for example transformed merely by occluding unnecessary words into **a weed of small worth / asked / to be new made** once again the narrative of men as primary figures is erased as bervin asserts **a weed of small worth** in the canonical work of shakespeare the **weed of small worth / asked / to be new made** is an ongoing concern in bervin's work as she harvests minor or overlooked poetic gestures emerging from the literary ground of other writers work her melancholic art focuses on creation through absence bervin writes through the whole of literature and creates a text that is **open porous possible—a divergent elsewhere** inspired by modernist fiber artist anni albers bervin uses the typewriter to compose weaving diagrams bervin places herself in a poetic lineage starting with

albers use of the typewriter for weaving patterns instead of the poetic theories of american modernist poets charles olson (ironically a colleague of albers at black mountain college) and robert creeley olson and creeley— contemporaries with gomringer the de campos brothers and pignatari— suggest the poetic use of the typewriter to measure and chart the breath line much as composers use the stave and bars of sheet music the typewriter in the hands of albers and bervin is no longer an office machine used to create and measure the male voice bervin silences the office and the male poetic breath line in favor of the grid created by the warp and weft of weaving asserting the text in textile bervin writes that she **typed these works on a brother correctronic 50 typewriter** and continues:

i think of them as scores to be performed on a loom or with needle and thread. all of them were made following intensive time spent weaving cloth structures on the loom but refer back to draft notation, the pre-weaving diagrams a weaver creates or consults. they were inspired by anni albers' typewriter studies from black mountain college (the impetus for my desire to study weaving). it was quickly apparent to me that her profound understanding of cloth structure gave her a unique perspective on the gridded space the typewriter offers.

bervins assertion that the typewriter creates scores for performance makes weaving a readerly and writerly act extending her typewriter-driven work bervin also has an ongoing engagement with emily dickinsons manuscripts and correspondence bervins work in **postscript** is excerpted from a series

of quilt-sized fiber responses to emily dickinsons poetry manuscripts notoriously reclusive and agoraphobic dickinson created a series of fascicles (hand-sewn packets of manuscript pages) that featured not only her handwritten poems but also her idiosyncratic amendments insertions and editorial marks bervin uses these marks as inspiration for her large-scale embroidered works; each piece transforms dickinsons palimpsests of crosses marginalia tics and textual insertions into fragile marks formed from thousands of individual stitches and placed in testament to the hand-sewing that dickinson herself did when compiling her fascicles while dickinson secluded herself her **œuvre** formed with poems and letters her fascicles and her own physical absence bervin erases dickinsons poems in favor of her private editorial marks—the marks that werent exposed in correspondence bervins fragile stitches echo the thread that held dickinsons own books together and stood as a private—and unknown until after her death—testament to her poetic craft bervin in **nets** in her typewriter weaving patterns and especially in her responses to dickinson creates melancholic testaments to poetry secluding the original author in favor of erasure private marks and maps for creation **postscript: writing after conceptual art** contributor erica baum also poeticizes our minor gestures baum transforms a reading act—the motion of dog-earing a books page—into a writerly one baums **dog ear** (2011) consists of a series

of photographs each of which lushly reproduces the image of the folded corner of a pulp novel by dog-earing a page a reader employs the pages of a book as a new tool not only does each page impart the text of the written work it also can be used to mark the readers progress through that very text gently flipping through any used book reveals the ephemeral record of the previous owners—notes underlining marginalia bookmarks (accidental or intended)—and the dog-eared corner creasing each of these remnants marks the readers progress through the book; they map the imposition of life outside the novel on to the writing inside the novel with **dog ear** baum documents how each memory-assisting fold that the reader places within a book becomes a generative act creating a new latent text a uniting concern of **postscript: writing after conceptual art** is the engagement with the materiality of text and writing that the information we receive and filter generate and propagate has a physical presence beyond the semantic baums engagement with the physicality of text is unique within the purview of the exhibition as she engages not only with the page but also with how readers manipulate and destroy books while reading **dog ear** not only documents how the place-holding fold affects the book it also proves how the folding creates something new to read baums poems echo and extend the ideas of canadian artist brion gysin and his notorious colleague william s. burroughs in the 1950s gysin and burroughs

rediscovered the compositional techniques of dadaist poet tristan tzara (the author of **how to make a dadaist poem** in 1920) in what they dubbed **cut-up** and **fold-in** writing a **fold-in** poem burroughs argues is created when the author

place[s] a page of one text folded down the middle on a page of another text (my own or someone else's)—the composite text is read across half from one text and half from the other.

gysin and burroughs collaborations are most famously documented in **the cut-up method of brion gysin** (1961) and **the third mind** (1978) gysin and burroughs like tzara before them proposed a democratic form of poetic composition anyone can pick up a pair of scissors or fold a page of the newspaper to create poetry—but baum extends that idea from a form that anyone **could** do to something that everyone **does** do dog-earing books is a ubiquitous habit by aestheticizing that minor gesture—the folding of a pages corner to mark a pause in reading—she asserts that the conceptual artistic act is an act of choosing the resultant texts in baums dog-eared pages can be read in multiple directions piling up like robert smithsons **a heap of language** and each direction releases a text unintended by the original author **dog ear** consists of reader-generated poems that use the destructive / productive folding of a page to both destroy (the original text is obscured) and produce (as the over-leaved text is revealed) a text that did not previously exist craig dworkin in his

introduction to **the ubuweb anthology of conceptual writing** argues that conceptual writing—as typified by **postscript** and baums **dog ear**—is

not so much writing in which the idea is more important than anything else as a writing in which the idea cannot be separated from the writing itself: in which the instance of writing is inextricably intertwined with the idea of writing: the material practice of *écriture*.

baums **index** series (2000) extends her artistic focus on the materiality of the book to the typographic materiality of the indices of anonymous volumes of non-fiction each piece in **index** isolates and magnifies a series of entries from a books index and each revels in the poetic juxtapositions of seemingly random text when placed in isolation the indexical nature of the text fades in preference of a new uncanny meaning viewers are left to imagine the potential volume that might include:

resolution of the week, 313,

314

results, concrete, 271–286

reverie, 92, 154, 163, 172

imagined texts point to a self-help book promising profound reveries from dedicated attempts to stick to change-making resolutions; the life-changing effects of **results, concrete**—but simultaneously that inference is locked within the readers imagination released only through the imposition of humanist poetic tropes on three indexical entries another excerpt from

index provides a list of poetic strategies that embody her own investigative problematizing compositional techniques as well as those of her colleagues banner and bervin:

transcend, 399.

transcribe, 271.

transfigure, 801.

transform, 801.

transgress, 549.

each of these indexical instructions—transcend transcribe transfigure transform transgress—points to a poetic direction exemplified in concrete poetry in conceptual writing and in the **œuvres** of banner bervin and baum herself fiona banner jen bervin and erica baum represent the very best of contemporary concrete poetry and each assert a space within a tradition that discards the fallacy of craftsmanship and handiwork as antithetical to industrious poetics

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judith copithorne has published over 40 books chapbooks and ephemeral items and has sustained a visual poetry practice for over 45 years beginning her exploration of concrete poetry in 1961 copithorne was deeply integrated in the communities around bill bissetts **blewointment** magazine and vancouvers sound gallery motion studio and intermedia copithornes early visual poetry—as typified by her **release** (1969) **runes**

(1970) and **arrangements** (1973)—are a braided combination of drawing and writing these early books are **hand drawn** as the colophon of **runes** explains **poem-drawings** (as **release** is subtitled) occupying the liminal space between poetry and drawing writing and sketching her exemplary work from the 1960s and 1970s integrates a diaristic practice (especially in **arrangements**) that documents a domestic space centered on meditation and community 1969s **release** consists of a series of wisp-like ethereal hand-drawn texts that move through gestural fragments and slights of handwriting accumulated into florid yogic texts that move between mandala and map the suggestion that her pieces are drawn and not written and are hyphenated poem-drawings speaks to a textual hybridity which places looking on the same plane as reading with **arrangements** **runes** and **release** copithorne creates a visual poetry of looking and reading the domestic and the community judith copithornes work isnt limited to the hand-drawn poem-drawings of the 1960s and 1970s however she has also written several books of prose and textual poetry for example: **hearts tide** (prose 1972) **a light character** (poetry 1985) **carbon dioxide** (poetry 1992) and numerous other editions of visual poetry **horizon** (1992) displays a beautiful engagement with typewriter stencil and photocopier degeneration to create a suite of wavering banners of textual detritus recently she has embraced digital means of composition and has had work

featured through ditch and intermedia these digitally composed pieces reflect copithornes newer style in crisp mandalas of oversaturated texts—digital stained glass windows that are beautifully dependent on the saturated colours of the computer screen while still echoing the handmade

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in caroline bergvalls goan atom (2001) fig (2005) and most recently meddle english (2011) clarity is struck by a poly-linguistic instability as speech fluency is an articulatory feat that presupposes the smooth functioning of speakings motor skills each sound becomes a joint a hinge where meaning can be redirected an and / or node of exchange bergvall embraces the instability of translation and dialect in order to create a series of poems that operate as a poly-sexual stuttering space with each poem the reader becomes aware of the movements occurring in her mouth and the way that the muscles articulate difference each slide of the tongue around the palate each voice glottal becomes a moment of spoken strangeness under bergvalls hand english is no longer stable (as if it ever was) but embraces the poly-national voices of english as a second language english as taught and learned and english as enforced expectation

i live in a time where english has exploded way beyond the national. it's being constantly recreated or de-created in the chaos of international english, it's

regionalized by the making-do inventiveness of postcolonial anglo-patois, and there are even written similarities with middle english in the general crisis of spelling that comprehensive education is currently going through. to use middle english opens up my poetics to a more historicized, diachronic understanding of words.

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i first encountered cecilie bjørgås jordheim in oslo in 2010 after brief discussions online she had been in the audience for a series of talks by kenneth goldsmith the year before and their correspondence lead to cecilie and i deciding that her work would be featured as part of the visual poetry section at **ubu** born in bergen norway jordheim is a recent graduate of the oslo national academy of the arts working primarily in the media of visual scores her work has a significant amount of crossover into visual poetry while christian marclay also works with found and manipulated musical scores as an artistic media crafting graphic representations of the language of musical notation jordheims work is more closely aligned with an eco-poetic mindset marclays scores develop from found consumer goods strategically broken records and vandalized posters (for example 2010s **prêt-à-porter** and 2009s **zoom zoom**) while jordheim creates musical scores from ecological lines and fragments jordheims **partitur** (produced in an edition of 57 signed copies by glemmeboka 2010) is a 147-page score for violin that uses the mountain range around vesterålen norway to

suggest a performance with **partitur** jordheim sees the horizon line as a readable poetic line one which can only be read it can also be performed jordheims proposed reading practices generate musical scores compositions for violin cello and vocal performance which create eerie pataphysical evocations of place and landscape jordheim also treats the literary landscape as she does the natural reading is an act of looking and scoring in the **conceptualisms dossier** in the issue 93 of **matrix** she evokes architectural drawings of a cityscape by mapping the lyrics to starships insipid 1980s pop song **we built this city** the schmaltz of the contemporary musical landscape is transformed into an anonymous cityscape as devoid of character as the original song 2008s **barcodes**—jordheims student work—is a 16mm film (transferred to video and now to youtube) that consists entirely of manipulated barcodes using compositional strategies similar to those of norman mclaren jordheim glued each barcode on to the films image and sound tracks the film

then make[s] sound as it passes the photoelectric cell in the film projector and shows a direct connection between the sound and the image. what you see is what you hear. by having glued on a barcode in different sizes, it plays in a range of two octaves, approx. from low to high c. the density of the lines decides the pitch—the more lines per frame, the higher pitch.

jordheims translation of ecologies (both natural and artificial) into musical score suggests the readability and performability of any line much as the

late bob cobbing famously would see coffee cup rings mud puddles and bark as scores for potential sound poetry performance her 10-point manifesto **how does it sound?** summarizes her artistic / poetic concerns and forwards a series of talking points which interrogate the intersection between conceptualism musical score and writing the landscape:

how does it sound?

1. why would one produce the sound of a mountain?
2. what is it that tells me that this horizon should be documented? will it not be there forever?
3. is it an attempt to describe something eternal and solid that has been there for ages, long before man managed to put its knowledge of the mountain into systems like language, drawings, maps, geological and geographical methods?
4. isn't art the desire to shape and describe something that cannot be grasped, and doesn't this apply to all academic disciplines?
5. where is the relationship between art and science at this point, and how do human factors and inaccuracies come to question when the premises are added and selected by ourselves? is it choice or chance?
6. has modern man lost its ability to combine factual knowledge in, i.e. mathematics, with an intuitive sensitivity to the basic correlations?
7. what challenges and constraints does the notational system provide us?
8. where lies the need to systematize and represent nature? is music always a mime of nature or is it an abstract autonomous form?

9. is there an isomorphic relation (a similitude) between nature and language; the shape of the mountains and the sound of it?
10. and how does it sound?

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alison turnbulls **spring snow—a translation** (2002) is a page by page response to the colour palette of yukio mishimas **spring snow** as soon as i encountered the book i was both anxious and thrilled with **spring snow—a translation** turnbull reads mishimas original not for plot for character or for any other traditional reading trope instead she reads simply to record the occurrence of more than 600 colour words she then lists each of these words by page number and chapter the published edition takes the cataloguing even further by presenting a chart of 12 blocks on each page—each swatch representing a different colour from mishimas original in the order it occurred reading here is not a search for a narrative-driven epiphanic moment it is simply a charting of encounter with the text on the page mishimas **spring snow** is loosened from signification—the words no longer point at a larger narrative they point only at colour turnbulls translation of **spring snow** focuses not on the narrative nor on the problems of moving from one written language to another—she treats the language itself to a filtering embodying becketts defense of joyces **work in progress**: [h]ere is direct expression—pages and pages of it the colours

through repetition build a suspense and crescendo which is loosened from traditional narrative derrida writing on blanchot asked

how can one text, assuming its unity, give or present another to be read, without touching it, without saying anything about it, practically without referring to it?

each page of **spring snow** is a completely unique diagrammatic representation of the occurrences of certain words by reducing reading and language into a paragrammatical statistical analysis content is subsumed into graphical representation of how language covers a page turnbulls translation is not such much a single translation as a workbook for further translations—one can imagine what other narratives could form around the occurrence of those particular hues scattered in that particular order⁹ barthes argued that

the text requires that one try to abolish (or at the very least to diminish) the distance between writing and reading, in no way by intensifying the projection of the reader into the work but by joining them in a single signifying practice.

the emphasis here is on latency turnbull unlocks mishimas text as only one of a series of potentialities—a single volume in a borgesian library of texts swaying around anchored chroma

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emma kays **worldview** (1999) successfully negotiates the schism between the humanist drive and the conceptual compositional strategy where language is assembled not written **worldview** is nothing less than kays

exhaustive history of the world from the big bang to the year 1999 written entirely from memory **worldview** is highly personal but rather than dwell on experience and the inherent ability of language to represent meaning kay writes in the flattened infallible tone of a high school textbook kay recites the history of the world not through import or sociological subject matter but purely through the idiosyncrasies of her own faulty memory **worldview** spends only the first 75 (of 230) pages of the history of the world until the 20th century the remainder on the encyclopedic recitation of history drawn primarily from the artists lifetime all with a flawless tone of cultural authority a sample section of the index to **worldview** reveals kays own selective sense of history:

HIV, 156, 181

holland, 45, 57

holliday, billy, 113

hollywood, 86, 99, 145, 190, 195

holocaust, 92, 95

holograms, 129

hollyfield, evander, 197

(220).

worldview is a maddening text as it testifies that a contemporary artist could actually conceive of a world where aerosmith (132) and archimedes (16) have the same historical credence kays text is both encyclopedic in

purview and centered on the fallibility of personal recollection **worldviews** non-interventionalist practice is typical of much conceptual writing as the filter between the ordinary and the extraordinary becomes a theoretical one key accrues language and representation in a way that foregrounds the materiality and accumulation of text but also documents memory 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

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monica aasprongs **soldatmarkedet** is a section of an ongoing project (2003-07) of the same name aasprongs 160-page collection is a cross-section of her computer-generated digital output aasprong a norwegian has created a computer algorithm that randomly scatters spaces within a page covered with the letter t while the description sounds rather banal the output resembles aerial photographs of the movements of populations around public squares which is no coincidence aasprongs poetry attempts to respond to a public square in berlin from the mid-1770s titled the soldatmarkedet (in german the gendarmenmarkt) breaking the word into its smallest units of composition reassembling them as paal bjelke andersen writes

in long series and geometrical, iconic or seemingly random shapes. but [...] integrated in these works characterized by an extreme dispersion and discontinuity, there is a more semantically based study of the connotations of the title word, its referential qualities, a drifting through its historical, social and imaginative surroundings

this manifestation of **soldatmarkedet** consists entirely of the lower-case t and spaces and within those elements aasprong has created a text that occupies the public space of geography and architecture of the page

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digital and visual poets aspire to create writing that embraces both a poetic sensitivity and a mastery of graphic design and cutting edge technology they aim to create poetry that can deftly mimic the best advertising logos television commercials and credit-rolls from hollywood films sadly those same poets dont realize that to accomplish this poetic feat they must master multiple fields their work must be as poetically strong as it is technologically—they must be aware of the poetic possibilities of the tools they have in front of them and allow those tools to reconfigure how poetry operates much too often those attempts are puerile introductory sketches that do nothing but undermine the poets credibility as both a crafter of page-based poems and a manipulator of digital technology **between page and screen** changes the game on the surface amaranth borsuk and brad bouses slim 44-page volume is a collection of 16 simple QR-codes

manipulating between 5 and 12 white squares on a black 8 x 8 grid each piece is a playful engagement with the poetic possibilities of suprematism echoing malevich's **black square** (1915) the visual poems in **between page and screen** are beautifully minimal explorations of a poetics beyond semantics the book and the QR-code poems inside are only half of the reading experience when the reader accesses www.betweenpageandscreen.com the book's full potential is realized once **between page and screen** is opened and each QR-code poem is exposed to the camera embedded in the reader's computer what appears on the screen is unlike any other reading experience each QR-code releases a seemingly 3D poem that digitally hovers over the book's pages on the computer screen wavering as the reader moves the pages the reader sees themselves and the book reflected back to them but on the screen the pages are augmented by a moving rotating text which digital leaps into being the poems themselves are epistolary poems between p and s a negotiation of the spaces between lovers and the spaces between analogue and digital:

dear s,

a screen is a shield but also a veil—

it's sheer and can be shorn. there's a

neat gap between these covers, a gate

agape, through which you've slipped

your tang. paper cuts too,

swordsmith. let's name this pagan
pageant, these rows of lines or vines
that link us together.

—p

between page and screen lives in the liminal spaces the ineffable
combination of page and screen it foreshadows a future for the book that
looks beyond e-readers kindles and kobos to a textuality that combines
page and screen that is neither and both

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in her first book of poetry **poets and killers: a life in advertising** (2010)
helen hajnoczky reports a single mans life from delivery to death living a
modest 60 years this anonymous figures biography is formed entirely by
the advertising slogans of the products he purchased in the years they were
bought thus the childhood of hajnoczkys everyman figure is elucidated
entirely with slogans and ad campaigns from the 1940s without any editorial
intervention this lack of an editorial hand is what makes hajnoczkys work
so uncanny every phrase every sentence of **poets and killers** was lifted
directly from print advertising—hajnoczky has not written a word—nor has
she had need helen hajnoczkys restrained tightly-focused poems explore
the modern milieu where individuality is defined by consumerism from
cradle to grave our individual narratives are written not by our actions but

by our purchases our identities are tied to the products we purchase the labels we wear and the information we filter:

from our conception to our burial, from pre-natal vitamins to coffins, we are consumers. advertising saturates our world, coating everything from magazines to bus stops, staircases to cereal boxes, all in an effort to preserve and augment our consumer culture.

poets and killers playfully investigates what it means to be **an individual in a world where we are all sold the same individuality** and the possibilities for a **non-utilitarian humanity** which **potentially exists between the lines of advertising copy** as the characters life unfolds we must decide whether he falls within the realm of poet killer or a member of the category just as laden with poetic possibility: an average person the chronology of **poets and killers** follows both the protagonists aging and the intricacies of the modern day-to-day but also how our relationship with advertising has grown advertising has—according to hajnoczky—become increasingly insidious moving from overt to subtle interplays within our formulations of self-definition self-awareness and self-debasement:

advertising copy no longer directly asserts that not using its product will result in a catastrophic tragedy, but carefully manipulates the reader into thinking they desire the product advertised.

in **poets and killers: a life in advertising** readers follow the protagonists growth simultaneously with the growth of advertising

*

finnish-swedish berlin-based poet cia rinne revels in the clinamen and the paragram the playful moment brought about by the minimal change in typographical difference for a canadian readership the paragram evokes bpnichols 9-volume **martyrology** most especially **book 5** (1982) as typified in **chain 3**:

puns break

words fall apart

[...]

when i let the letters shift sur face

is just a place on which im ages drift

rinne uses typographical difference—the movement of phonemes the insertion of spaces the aural pun the homonym—to allow for quiet moments of poetic discovery rinne investigates the typewriter as a compositional tool exploring how the typewriters fixed-width typefaces allow for poetic play within the implied grid of the line and page **notes for soloists** (2009) and **zaroum** (2001) are both ruefully out of print but available online through **ubuwebs** visual poetry section reissued as **zaroum** (2011) and complimented by the digital project **archives zaroum notes for soloists** was expanded into a beautiful collaborative sound piece with sebastian eskildsen entitled **sounds for soloists** (2011) as nichol continues in **chain 3**:

this multiplication

attention to a visual duration

comic stripping of the bared phrase

the pain inside the language speaks

ekes out meaning phase by phase

make my way thru the maze of streets & messages

reading as i go

creating narratives by attention to a flow of signs)

both **notes for soloists** and **zaroum** are multilingual texts slipping from

english to german to french each in a minimal moment of poetic

exploration each echo yoko onos **grapefruit** (1964) as zen koan-like

meditations of poetic emptiness in an interview rinne argues that she

attempts to **keep some sort of simplicity or minimalism in the writing**

and visual expression and in the way the final object is produced

much as onos **grapefruit** includes

line piece i

draw a line.

erase the line.

line piece ii

erase lines.

line piece iii

draw a line with yourself.

go on drawing until you disappear.

1964 spring

rinnes multilingual engagement with absence and silence is most poetic when seen in light with her artistic investigation with marginalized communities her collaborations with photographer joakim eskildsen has resulted in **a voyage to ichickenmoon** (1999) written while living post-apartheid with a zulu-speaking south african family; **blue tide: a true story = maré azul: uma história verdadeira** (1997) in a portuguese fishing village; and **the roma journeys** (2007) which documents the marginalization of roma throughout europe rinnes fracturing of language seems on the surface engaged in the dance of the clinamen within languages

playing with the homophone qualities of different languages, or stripping the words of their usual context so they become something other than mere means of communication

(as rinne herself argues in an interview in **3:am magazine**) rinnes paragrammatic explorations however are quiet meditations on how language ostracizes and marginalizes the other the spaces and silences in **zaroum** and **notes for soloists** point at the absence in the midst of the play

*

berlins natalie czech creates limit case pieces that point to the end of erasure texts each piece a seemingly impossible conjuring of texts within texts czechs *je n'ai rien à dire. seulement à montrer. / ich habe nichts zu sagen. nur zu zeigen. / i have nothing to say. only to show.* (2012) is an awe-inspiring book of literary conjuring **i have nothing to say. only to show**

occurrence of entire poems photographs them in situ and exhibits these
bravado acts of poetic discovery as troubling the line between poetic and
photographic documentation in **a hidden poem by e.e. cummings #2**
czech discovers cummings 1961 poem

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weirdly embedded within the text of a life-magazine era article whose
headline reads in part **FAR AWAY THE HUGE BOMB EXPLODE [...] / INSURED,**
UNLIKELY ENOUGH TOWARD [...] not only is the article and accompanying
photograph an uncanny commentary on the poem but cummings original is
somehow entirely extant—with line breaks and spacing intact—within the
article itself a single example of this seemingly impossible task is enough
to incite jealousy and wonder at the audacity of czechs find what makes

hidden poems even more impossible is that czechs ability to find repeated poems by creeley brinkmann khlebnikov lax kerouac and ohara each also embedded within the cultural fabric of non-poetic media

*

contemporary concrete and conceptual poets trouble the poetic discourses of de campos cage gysin burroughs and smithson through the gendered exploration of concrete poetry beyond classical sans serif typography contemporary conceptual poetry is defined by its material use of language—language which stretches beyond gender into new structures based on readability and legibility trace and evidence each of these poets transcribe difference in reading constructing reading and writing through a new geography of transgressive meaning-making by mining the non-semantic and the non-traditional each of these poets are able to transfigure writing which transforms difference and enables an alternative to the normative concrete and conceptual poetry can no longer be considered a male-dominated field

transcend transcribe transfigure transform transgress

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isbn: 978-1-927636-61-9

published in Ottawa by above/ground press, December 2014

a/g subscribers receive a complimentary copy

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cover image by amaranth borsuk

derek beaulieu is the author or editor of 15 books, the most recent of which are *Please, No more poetry: the poetry of derek beaulieu* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013) and *kern* (Les Figues press, 2014). He is the publisher of the acclaimed no press and is the visual poetry editor at UBUWeb. Beaulieu has exhibited his work across Canada, the United States and Europe and currently teaches at the Alberta College of Art + Design. He is the 2014-2016 Poet Laureate of Calgary, Canada.

This is derek beaulieu's sixth above/ground press chapbook, after an issue of the long poem magazine *STANZAS* ("calcite gours 1-19," issue no. 38), the interview chapbook *ECONOMIES OF SCALE: rob mclennan interviews derek beaulieu on NO PRESS / derek beaulieu interviews rob mclennan on above/ground press* (2012) and single-author chapbooks *"A? any questions?"* (1998), *[Dear Fred]* (2004) and *HOW TO EDIT, Chapter A.* (ALBERTA SERIES #8; 2008).

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