

AN AMERICAN
AVANT GARDE:
SECOND WAVE
AN EXHIBIT

RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS LIBRARY
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

AN AMERICAN AVANT GARDE: SECOND WAVE

AN EXHIBIT

Featuring work from the
Avant Writing Collection

Catalog of an exhibit at
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

June 20, 2002 - September 3, 2002

John M. Bennett and Geoffrey D. Smith,
Curators

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Front cover art: *Ficus strangulensis*.

Back cover art: Jim Leftwich



Jim Leftwich. From *Croaker Norge*. 1995.

Note on the text:

Because avant garde writers experiment and play with language, apparent misspellings, transpositions, or syntactical lapses may be intentional. We have avoided using the intrusive [sic] as needlessly cumbersome, but in so doing may have abrogated our editorial roles. Should the attentive reader and avant garde scholar note actual error, we acknowledge our singular responsibility for the flaws, though we hope they are few, if existent at all.

J.M.B. G.D.S.

Collecting the New

Several years ago, on a tour of the Bodleian Library at Oxford University with David Vesey, then Bodleian Librarian, he uttered a truism that, in my own awestruck demeanor in the presence of the great treasures of that great library, had not occurred to me: the reason the Bodley has so many outstanding early volumes is that those books were new when they were first deposited at Oxford. Collecting and preserving the “new” has always been part of any great library's mission, for, as much as we appreciate the traditional and the classic, new books also elicit especial personal responses because they are the thoughts and emotions of our own time. At the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library of The Ohio State University Libraries, we have an active agenda of John Foxe scholarship: faculty, graduate and undergraduate students analyze and ruminate upon the great *Acts and Monuments* (The Book of Martyrs), which went through extensive revision and expansion since its first appearance in 1563. Yet, how different it must have been to digest that book as a new text in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England when the internecine religious struggles depicted in that great work were active issues of the day. Although current ideological struggles may take different forms from the Renaissance, political, social, religious and aesthetic issues continue to be debated and the texts that contain the trenchant thoughts and images of these culture wars are amongst us today. The special mission for rare book libraries is to identify these important contemporary works so that we may preserve them for perpetuity in our collections. It would be our vision that hundreds of years from now, when a naive visitor to OSU Libraries wonders how such treasures were amassed, the librarian of that time can blithely say, because we acquired them when they were new.

Generally, I would say that too many people buy and read what other people (the media magnates, the critics, Oprah) tell them to and too few people think long and hard about language as a cultural force in its own right. And, I would suggest, too much writing today is dishonest because too many authors adhere to canonical models and do so complacently as if the rewriting of love stories, horror stories, winter scenes, and domestic troubles were not as unoriginal as a television series. (In fact, television series, more attuned to the immediate concerns of the public, may have more originality than most current literary writing.) Simply, most writing does not challenge the reader to reconsider the fabric of life about him or her. The works on display for An American Avant Garde: Second Wave are contrary to the status quo and elicit extreme visceral reactions, cerebral responses, and spiritual awakenings because they force the reader to confront what those strange mixtures of words and configurations of design have to say about current society, particularly for the all too many of us who have been inculcated and dominated by traditional Anglo-American culture. Looking at much of the writing, one can say it makes no sense, it's like a foreign language and, in many cases, is a foreign language. You mean that people speak other than *us*? Yes, people speak other than us, and dress other than us, and believe other than us. And those are facts that are ever more apparent in a global culture at the advent of the twenty-first century.

The current exhibit is a collection of counter-culture works that are unique in assessing and visualizing reality, for there are at least “thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird.” And I quote Wallace Stevens because I do not think that any serious artist would claim complete novelty of form or content. The avant-garde has its own formal traditions and influential early avant-garde texts are on display in the current exhibit. Moreover, other major innovative works of the past are now part of the academy and taught on a regular basis. Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* both experimented with form while alluding to tradition. The poet Charles Olson infused the local geography of his work with anthropological and archaeological leaps of faith and expanded upon William Carlos Williams’ artistic credo, no ideas but in things. The long neglected but recovered *Pierre* by Herman Melville accentuates the elusiveness of rational meaning and understanding. Lawrence Sterne’s 18th century *Tristram Shandy* still leaves readers dizzy today. Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini’s *The Goodli History of the Ladye Lucrese of Scene and of her Lover Eurialus* in its original Latin was a fifteenth-century assault on social mores and an experimental and rhetorical tour de force. (After Piccolomini became Pope Pius II, he retracted his own youthful work via a papal bull.) And all of these works have contributed to an experimental literary tradition that has endured for centuries and is still clearly manifest in the avant garde works included in the exhibit.

If the special mission of contemporary rare book libraries is to preserve the record of contemporary as well as traditional cultural history, then we take particular risks because we do not have the foresight to know what will be treasured two, three or four centuries hence. The sheer numbers of printed and electronic texts being generated today require a much more selective collecting policy than earlier libraries had to exercise. In the case of literary, historical and cultural texts we must think long and hard about the uses of language and ideas that speak to our time, for that will be the record of how the future will view us. Immodestly, I believe that future scholars of twentieth- and twenty-first-century cultural history are going to hold the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at Ohio State in high esteem.

Geoffrey D. Smith, Professor and Head
Rare Books and Manuscript Library

THE BLANK GENERATION: AN AMERICAN AVANT GARDE

Most kinds of avant-garde poetry today are incipiently more international than earlier verse, since they offer much less resistance to the perennial problems of translation. The new poetries also tend to be less egotistical, as most avoid self-projection and other pretenses of personal superior sensitivity (while the authors themselves are less egomaniacal), for its creative processes are largely not expressionist but constructivist, as well as classically self-restrained. Most of this poetry is nonobjective, to use an esthetic term developed in the criticism of modernist painting, as the works emphasize properties intrinsic in the art, while references to outside phenomena are either implicit, unintended, or simply nonexistent. Some kinds of new poetry reflect advanced ideas in music (i.e. permutational form) and/or in visual art; and not only are some of its creators also personally proficient in nonliterary arts but a knowledge of current concerns in those fields is partially prerequisite to contemporary poetic literacy. A final point is that the new poetries and new fiction represent not just “games with language”, to quote a standard objection; but, gamy though they often are, these works are genuine explorations of alternative communication forms that are as linguistically meaningful as literature has always been.

– Richard Kostelanetz⁽¹⁾

During the last quarter of the 20th century, when avant garde tendencies in art and literature have proliferated with dizzying profusion around the world, one loosely-knit and unnamed group has come to seem especially tenacious and significant. Many of its members are North American and were born in the 1930's through the 1970's, but the group and its connections are truly international, collaborating and interacting with like-minded artists around the world. This has historically been the case with avant-garde cultures, which tend to perceive their activities in more universal than nationalistic terms. This does not mean, of course, that an American avant poet, say, does not engage deeply with his own uniquely American colloquial language or culture, but that the engagement is contextualized in terms of more universal styles and/or concerns.

What are some of the characteristics that identify this particular avant-garde? One of the most immediately obvious is that all of these writers, as writers, work outside the recognized literary, publishing, and institutional structures of society. They earn their livings as chemists, house painters, business consultants, architects, librarians, pizza deliverers, substitute teachers, and so on. In other words, they come from all sectors of society, and do not represent any particular class, ethnicity, or other social group (except perhaps their own cultural or aesthetic avant garde). It is, of course, a universal and necessary characteristic of avant-garde art that in order to create the new, the artist or writer has to step outside the structures that maintain the old. Although they rarely meet in person, as writers in academia, for example, are able to do, modern methods of communication (email, the internet, postal mail, telephones, mail art, small and underground presses, etc.) are such that the contacts between them are many and deep. And although they work in a great variety of styles and techniques, they share certain things.

For one, their work crosses several kinds of boundaries: the aesthetic and genre-related ones, of course (the boundaries of "taste", perhaps!); but also socio-political boundaries of national cultures, class, and professions. In addition, they work extensively in collaboration, producing works, whether published under pseudonyms or not, that transgress the boundaries of the individual ego or self. As Jim Leftwich says, "collaboration is a process wherein subjectivities are mingled and any assertion of boundaries, including beginnings and endings, begin quickly to appear entirely arbitrary".⁽²⁾

One can also identify certain general stylistic methods and aesthetic values that these writers have in common. I already mentioned collaboration. Another is the wide-ranging use of combinations of techniques from previous avant-gardes, such as the surrealism and dada of the early 20th century. (I believe there is a permanent avant-garde tradition: that what's avant-garde in one period remains so in the future; its innovations are not wholly adopted by the mainstream culture, but are, in part, diluted, and made more widely accessible.) There is also a great out-pouring and wonderful diversity of new techniques, processes, styles, and attitudes among these writers. In fact, they function in all kinds of mixed and trans-generic ways, and some of them are true polyartists, working as painters, or musicians, or whatever, and combining their many skills.

A use of language for various non-"literary" ends is also prevalent among them: language is treated as something beyond language, as something to be seen, heard, touched, transformed, codified, mathematicized, digitized, kineticized, and spiritualized. They have produced literature on labels, on audio and video tape, on film, in digital media, in stone and wood and glass and meat or in any materials you can imagine (and in some you can't!). In general, we can say that this group challenges all the preconceptions about what literature is. Some of them also experiment with the idea of what a "book" is, fundamentally challenging the very meaning of this important cultural artifact.

Although this generation is in many ways directly indebted to the cut-up and other disjunctive techniques of William S. Burroughs and his generation, Burroughs can be seen in a context of American comic cynicism (along with Mark Twain and Ambrose Bierce, for example): that is, as writing with some underlying moral purpose. This new group is in many ways outside that. If there is a moral/ethical foundation in their work, which I believe there is, it is very broadly conceived, even metaphysical at times. This doesn't mean their work is exclusively abstract. In fact, it may refer at times to very specific political/social/cultural events or issues. But it does so in a generally non-prescriptive fashion. It is writing that is involved with, or observes the world through a metaphysical lens, a lens which is most immediately apparent as a broad array of stylistic and structural devices.

These writers then, are very different from the three most visible groups of poets and writers in America today: the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets (an academic avant-garde which does share certain superficial characteristics with the group under consideration), and the small press and academic writers and poets. These other groups subscribe, in different ways, to an ethos of poetry or writing as a tool for moral improvement, as a didactic instrument that must follow certain rhetorical and thematic rules for

the “betterment” of its practitioners and readers. Poetry may well have that function, but it usually fails to achieve it when it tries to fulfill it explicitly or by following prescriptive rules. It tends to become simply craft more than art. Art (which includes craft, of course) is what challenges prevailing notions of reality and perception, and as a result recreates the world. Making the world new through language art is the mission of these stunning and various “second wave” writers.

In a general sense, this group is part of a uniquely American tradition of self-taught artists (think of composers like Harry Partch or John Cage, photographer Ralph Eugene Meatyard, painter Basquiat, artists Ed Ruscha or Ray Johnson, or the Fluxus artists: even those who had formal training in some field ended up working outside the forms and aesthetics of that training). Many of these people did not learn their craft and art in academic settings, but have gone their own ways, sometimes quite deliberately choosing to avoid contamination by, or conflict with, the dominant institutional and mainstream esthetic. (Partial exceptions to this may be seen in the careers of William T. Vollmann and Richard Kostelanetz, who have managed to publish at least some of their work in more mainstream media, without compromising their ideas or practices.) In this, this group is very much like the generation of William S. Burroughs, whose work and artistic/cultural context were featured in *An American Avant Garde: First Wave* exhibit held at the OSU Libraries a year ago. Both groups found their communities in a widely varied international avant garde culture.

One of the techniques of Burroughs, Brion Gysin, and their generation was that of cut-up writing. Burroughs practiced that quite literally, using various procedures for recombining and editing texts (or tape recordings) that had been cut apart with scissors. This produced a literary style and diction that in this “second wave” has become something written directly, by-passing the use of scissors. Cut-ups, then, which appeared early in the 20th century as a game or technique of surrealist and dada artists, passed through Gysin and Burroughs and the concrete poets in the mid-century where it became a major technique, and by the century’s end had become a “natural” way of writing, had become the diction and voice of poets like F. A. Nettelbeck, Sheila E. Murphy, John M. Bennett, Jim Leftwich, Thomas L. Taylor, Carlos M. Luis, and many others. Actual cut-ups are still done, along with other kinds of chance operations, but it is often now a procedure used in visual poetry, so that one can actually see the cutting that has occurred, as if it had a kind of ritual value.

Chance or arbitrary processes and collaboration are ways to expand the possibilities of language and the individual consciousness. Other specific techniques it would be useful to mention in that regard (there are too many to discuss them all, but cf. the work of Bob Grumman and Richard Kostelanetz for more⁽³⁾) include transduction, formal invention, and the use of appropriated text. Transduction, or homophonic translation, is the use of words that “sound like” the expected words but are different. It can be applied by transducing previously existing texts, or by the writer transducing the words that come to him or her in the act of writing. Formal invention involves creating new forms, or adapting or altering old ones, and filling them with language. A new form will always result in new and unexpected texts: what language means is very much a function of the

form and structure in which it occurs. Richard Kostelanetz asserts, in fact, that “the foundation of experimental literature is a history of formal innovation”.⁽⁴⁾ Very similar is the creation of neologisms, something much practiced by these writers. Another related technique is the use of mixed genres: language not only on paper, but in painting, music, photography, collage, sculpture, performance, and so on, as well as mixtures of “prose”, “poetry”, “drama” “autobiography”, and the like.

The use of appropriated texts takes many forms. Transduction of found or others’ texts is one of them. “Hacks”, as practiced especially brilliantly by Al Ackerman, is another. This involves various arbitrary ways of combining texts or distorting a text so that something completely unexpected results. There are also writers, such as Scott MacLeod, who practice “plagiarism” or the use of “source texts”, usually by recombining, rearranging, or recontextualizing others’ texts to create something new. Obviously, this very concept flies in the face of the established institutional values of complete and total “originality” in all things. But I think that any open-minded examination of these “plagiarized” texts would reveal the truly original and unique nature of what has been produced. In contrast, much of what is written in the “originality”-obsessed established media sounds the same, and is not truly original at all.

Cut-up or disjunctive language is also found at the level of the word itself, with words broken up into their syllables, letters, or other parts, at times approaching or even achieving, a kind of “meaningless” or asemic writing. (The latter may also be practiced as a kind of glossolalic “spirit” hand-writing or calligraphy.) Jim Leftwich says, “when one considers letter strings and clusters as vocables, rather than as words, one is not in the realm of linguistics and semiotics, is only peripherally, contingently within the realm of language. It is likely that most readers will attempt to ‘translate’ a poem of vocables into a poem of words. It is likely that this will educe complex, convoluted, frustrated cerebration, a sort of hyper-misreading – disappointment as hermeneutics. Readings of this variety might produce very resonant writings, only barely and obliquely related to the read.”⁽⁵⁾

While the historical roots of this second wave are in surrealism, dada, futurism, zaum, Burroughsian cut-ups, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writing, and other tendencies, I believe this new group has taken a major step beyond, even though they use some items from their predecessors’ and contemporaries’ bags of tricks such as chance operations, collaboration, surrealist games, and such. The other North American (and less international) avant-garde, the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets, with whom this second wave group is largely contemporaneous, has, in addition to becoming fairly rapidly institutionalized, posited their work as a political construct challenging the structures of American society.

The second wave group has a rather different attitude to their work: it is illustrative to think that they are using language rather like shamans. In other words, they are speaking a language of “otherness”; a language from above and below, or beyond, “this” world. They are outside, looking in looking out. That other “reality” is found in the language of their poetry; the language itself is the shamanic vision, more than its description. If you listen with your other ear, you will hear and know that other place, which includes the “world” but is much more than it: it is a vision (a “hearing/speaking”) of

everything that is. The poet is an intermediary between “this” world and its language and the other world and its language. “This” world’s language only covers up the vast swarming total and real world of language (which is the vessel of self or spirit). Or as Jack Foley says in a blurb on Ivan Argüelles’ new book *Tri Loka*, “if we don’t ‘have’ an ego, what do we ‘have’? Only an amazing language which simultaneously attracts us and betrays us at every possible moment”.⁽⁶⁾

These ideas are consistent with surrealist theory, though not so much with actual surrealist practice which tended to fall behind what was actually written (as is often the case). Another way of describing this is that the poem or text is a kind of symbolic mask showing the true nature of language and reality, the underlying order (or disorder) of things which in ordinary life seem chaotic or unpredictable. The use of masks to show ultimate reality is also a universal shamanic practice.

This suggests that the reader must approach this work with different strategies than he or she is used to. The texts may seem chaotic and incomprehensible. I would go so far as to say that if some of these materials do seem to have an ordinary or narrative meaning or “message”, that that understanding is really an illusion, or a trick the author is playing on the reader: this is work that does not tell you to “change your life” as the Rilkean formula would have it; it shows you what life is. And what it shows is that life is infinitely complex and ever-changing, that there is no definitive reading of these texts or of life and the world, that one must accept and embrace the protean ambiguity of all that is and that one can never really “know” it all. Again, Jim Leftwich: “if language is a causal agent in our construction of how things are, it continues as an urgent necessity that we alter our engagement with it”.⁽⁷⁾ If the language seems logoclastic, then one must change one’s way of reading it, so that what seems broken will be whole.

So to read this material, one must open all one’s senses as much as possible: don’t try to “figure it out” like it’s a crossword puzzle, but receive its sound, its visual presence, its textures, the meanings and resonances of its words. As David W. Seaman says of Pierre Garnier, “the poem, today, in a functional and cosmic humanity must become an object - then a center of energy. This means that the creative act becomes the poem. Thus this poetry is not expressionist, because it does not want to communicate something, merely to create. However, because of the energy posited in the poem-object, this creation ‘communicates’ by its mere presence. The discussion of Garnier’s poetic theory reaches a conclusion, then, with the poet obscuring himself behind a vital poem, waiting to release its energy with a creative reader”.⁽⁸⁾

All words are connected to all other words, and to all of the senses and kinds of consciousness a human being has. This second wave writing moves strongly and deliberately in that universe, and the reader can join them if he or she sets aside his or her pre-conceptions about what literature should be. One might ask what affect these writers’ work will have on language in general. If you think of language as the primary medium of human culture, it could be described as an ocean in which culture, or humanity, exists. It *is* culture, perhaps. Anytime a person speaks, writes, thinks, or in any other way functions linguistically it is like an event in the water that to a greater or lesser extent cre-

ates currents throughout the entire body, like that pebble dropped in a pond. The body of work these word artists are creating is like an entire landmass that has entered the sea of language and is thus affecting every inch of that sea. The waves and currents are spreading out and in one way or another will reach and affect the language of us all.

So what do we call this group? Can it even be considered a group, as were the Beats a generation ago? The "Beat Generation" designation was largely a media concept: the writers were actually quite different but with some general characteristics and attitudes in common. The same can be said for this "second wave", except that there has been little recognition of them in the popular or institutional media. Hence, they have no name, a situation which is ironically fitting given their tendency to screen or expand what is traditionally construed as the human ego. I am hopeful that this exhibition based on the collections in the OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts Library will help to identify and make more visible this Blank Generation.⁽⁹⁾

John M. Bennett, Curator
Avant Writing Collection

- 1) Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature*, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1982, p. 410.
- 2) Letter to John M. Bennett, May 15, 2002.
- 3) cf. Bob Grumman, *Of Manywhere-At-Once*, Port Charlotte, FL: Runaway Spoon Press, 1991; Kostelanetz, op cit.; and other works by and edited by Kostelanetz such as *Poetics of the New Poetries*, 1983.
- 4) Kostelanetz, op cit., p. xi.
- 5) Letter to John M. Bennett, November 9, 2001.
- 6) Ivan Argüelles, *Tri Loka*, Bedford, MA: Potes & Poets Press, 2001.
- 7) Letter to John M. Bennett, May 10, 2002.
- 8) David W. Seaman, *Concrete Poetry in France*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981, p. 242-43, as quoted in Steven Leiber, *Primarily Books from a Miami Beach Private Collection*, San Francisco, 2002.
- 9) BE BLANK is an exhortation by John M. Bennett and Robin Crozier which, starting around 1979, has been distributed around the world as an anonymous adhesive label.

SOME FOREBEARS

The sources for this “second wave” of avant garde literature, a successor exhibit to last year’s “first wave”, are many and come from all over the world. On display are just a few examples. Charles Henri Ford’s poetry and visual poetry have been an inspiring presence since the 1940’s, and he continues to work in his 90’s. French poet Isidore Isou brought focus to a way of viewing written language as a physical and artistic medium in its own right, quite apart from its function as a vehicle for conveying information. William S. Burroughs, who was the focus of the “first wave” exhibit, was an inspiration for almost all these “second wave” writers, with his influential promotion of collaboration, cut-ups (and other logoclastic techniques). Henri Chopin, Jackson Mac Low, and Bern Porter have all immeasurably expanded the possibilities of literature into the areas of sound, visual and conceptual art, and found and aleatory processes.

On Display:

Charles Henri Ford. *Sleep in a Nest of Flames*. [New York?]: A New Directions Book, 1949.

This is “strange, raw poetry, the poetry of a new race of Living,” according to the introduction by Edith Sitwell. Over many decades, Ford has been a pioneering presence in poetry, visual poetry, and other forms. The copy on display is signed by the author, with a copy of the famous 1948 photograph of Ford with other literary luminaries at a reception at the Gotham Book Mart, New York City.

While eggs bulge, music burns, stars say hello,
apples stagger, pulses rip, the dream pops open,
curtains harden, moons dissolve, love lasts often,
leaves unlock, age clowns, death and the lunatic listen, –

Isidore Isou. *Initiation à la Haute Volupté*. Paris: Aux Escaliers de Lausanne, 1960.

Isou was one of the most important of the French *lettristes*, a movement that had resonance in a number of avant-garde and innovative developments in fiction, poetry, and visual poetry. This “révolution de l’art du roman . . . [et] de l’erotisme” employs text, calligraphy, drawings, and other means.

William S. Burroughs. *The Soft Machine*. Paris: The Olympia Press, 1961.

Burroughs, with his cut-up techniques and “routines,” has been a major inspiration and source of validation to most of the writers in this exhibition. *The Soft Machine*, on display in an early “Traveler’s Companion” edition signed by the author, is a key piece of his influential oeuvre.

William S. Burroughs. *Le Temps des Assassins*. Berguette: S.U.E.L., Collection du Starscrewer, 1993.

A translation by Lucien Suel of *Time of the Assassins*. Suel is an important French avant-garde poet, writer, and publisher.

William S. Burroughs. *Unforgettable Characters: Lola ‘La Chata’ & Bernabé Jurado*. Brisbane, Australia: Xochi, 2001.

Includes an essay by Michael Spann on Burroughs’ characters, and one by Burroughs himself, “My Most Unforgettable Character.” That was Bernabé Jurado, Burroughs’ lawyer in Mexico City.

Every man can make his own universe.
Every man is then limited by the laws
of the universe he has made.

– William S. Burroughs

Henri Chopin. *Chronique 1974*. Chelmsford: Collection OU, 1975.

Widely published, Henri Chopin is an internationally known visual and sound poet. His *Poésie Sonore* is a seminal anthology in its field. *Chronique 1974* is a limited edition (500 copies) collection of typewriter and visual poetry. The copy on display is inscribed to William S. Burroughs by the author. It includes English translations of the texts by Jean Chopin, Henri's wife.

Jackson Mac Low. *54th Light Poem for Ian Tyson*. Milwaukee: Membrane Press, 1978.

A broadside grid poem, with instructions. Mac Low has been a relentless experimenter with new forms and approaches to poetry and text over many decades.

What is **T**his bullshit about bars .
So say wh**Y** you compartmentalize
What's loo**S**ening your lines Ian
Ach youve l**O**st half the gridiron
O Insitutio**N**s fall as easily

Bern Porter. *So Far: A Bern Porter Miscellany*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Roger Jackson, Publisher, 2001.

Bern Porter, who celebrated his 92nd birthday this year, gave up his career in nuclear physics (he was part of the Manhattan project) to explore, more radically than anyone of his or succeeding generations, the possibilities of found art and writing, often combining the two. He also wrote texts and poetry that defy classification. The anthology on display includes many different kinds of his work, and is 1 of 38 copies printed and signed by the author.

The xerographing of copyrights
the xeroxing of xeroxes
the x-ing of entries
the x-radiating of negatives

POSTERS AND BROADSIDES

Literature exists on more than just the printed page in a book. Throughout history, from Roman stone inscriptions to contemporary political placards, written language has been in both public and private spaces as part of the visual landscape. Here are just some examples of how poetry can be made this way. In one case, conceptual music is presented as a kind of visual poetry.

On Display:

Jack Hirschman. *Yod*. London: Trigram Press, 1966.

Jack Hirschman was a poet, visual poet, and painter with boundless enthusiasm and energy, who worked outside of all institutions and establishments. His work was a lifelong and freewheeling exploration of one's being in the world. The item on display is a handwritten and drawn accordion-fold book published in an edition of 200 copies.

The intestine is endless.

Irving Weiss. *Megaphone Index Poem*. [Enlarged typescript, signed by author.]

Irving Weiss is a widely published innovative poet and visual poet. He describes the displayed work as follows: "Excerpts from no matter which poetry anthology 'announcing' their identification of the book's contents. The lyric is a cry on the page represented by the 'I' or 'My' of the ego in the poem cluster and the 'O' of invocation or exclamation. More poems in the index to any anthology under those beginning words than under any others."

O come, soft r
O Earth, lie h
O fly, my Soul
O fly not, Plea

7 Poets Poems: A Portfolio of Visual Poems. Minneapolis: Stamp Pad Press, [1999].

An assembling portfolio of very different visual poems, each produced and signed by the individual authors. These are Steve McCaffery, Philip Gallo, Julien Blaine, Scott Helmes, Betty Danon, Dick Higgins, and Marilyn Rosenberg.

Juste un mot:
Trois mots
Deux mots
– Julien Blaine

Dick Higgins. *Piano Sonata #2 (Graphis #192)*. Barrytown, New York: Printed Editions, 1982.

Dick Higgins, a tireless experimenter and innovator in many media, especially literary ones, here presents transparent overlay sheets for "any existing piano music" which will rearrange the way the music is performed.

John M. Bennett & Scott Helmes. *Troub*. [St. Paul, Minnesota: Scott Helmes, 2002].

A poster-sized collaborative visual poem, 1 of 50 copies signed by the authors. Helmes rubberstamped a large cancellation block over most of a typewritten poem by Bennett, creating a mysterious "haiku" within a strong graphic image.

Troub
ly lathered
inside

PAGE 3 54TH LIGHT POEM 20 June
 FOR IAN TYSON 12:30 AM '77

Ian near Thameside Tower Bridge
 FAtteening his left shoulder sky
 Sun in his eyes make him freeze

In a Train is how I see Ian Tyson
 A worry Y ing in his river warlike
 What is Ian Tyson worrying about
 Break lose Ian smudge the ride
 So across of lines between

Ian you at the colors' obnoxious
 Bare ev the jails in any context
 FANTASIES of Ian's wrath arise
 How many times has he
 been subjected to
 this vulgar
 psychoanalytic reproach

What is this bullsh*t about have
 So say why your compartmental line
 what's loo S ending your lines Ian
 Ah you've lost half the gridiron
 O Institutions fall as easily

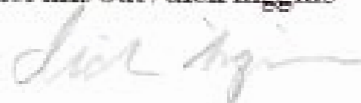
If I don't pry into your life how
 IAN can I throw any light on you
 No No asked you to throw anything

Light or darkness or rice grains
 Level Y colors sable squares hold
 Nonsense only relations are levelly
 Never colors per se hardly ever
 Ian Tyson in tertiary radiation

Jackson Mac Low. 54th Light Poem for Ian Tyson. 1978.

<p style="text-align: center;">b</p> <p style="text-align: center;">u</p> <p>s</p> <p style="text-align: right;">t</p> <p style="text-align: center;">c</p> <p style="text-align: center;">r</p>	<p>rebuts burets brules tubers</p> <p>slub re rust be bust re ub rel set rub rut bes rebus t</p>	
<p>a token take on take no at keno ten oak oak net</p>		<p style="text-align: right;">k</p> <p>e</p> <p style="text-align: right;">a</p> <p>t</p> <p style="text-align: right;">o</p> <p style="text-align: right;">n</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">s</p> <p style="text-align: center;">l</p> <p style="text-align: center;">u</p> <p style="text-align: center;">e</p> <p style="text-align: center;">r</p> <p style="text-align: center;">k</p> <p style="text-align: center;">e</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a</p> <p style="text-align: center;">t</p> <p style="text-align: center;">o</p> <p style="text-align: center;">n</p>	<p>burnt sake toe ulter bake ons stroke tea bun trout snake be enter stub oak rout knee bats</p>

act this out / dick higgins



Marvin & Ruth Sackner. *The Beauty in Breathing*. [Miami Beach: American Lung Association, 1992].

A poster for an exhibition focused on breathing, based on the Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry, for The American Thoracic Society International Conference, 1992. The poster consists of a collage of phrases about breathing taken from mass media sources. One of 500 copies, signed by the authors.

Charles Henri Ford. *Poem Poster*. [1964]

Striking and colorful collage of enlarged text and image, including a photograph of the dead bullfighter El Cordobés, advertisements, art school job announcements, and other material. Ford had these printed when he lived in Athens, Greece.

PINACH
nd history
ENCHANTED

Ronald Johnson. *Blocks To Be Arranged In a Pyramid: In Memoriam AIDS*. [n.p].: LVNG, 1996.

A visual poem printed as a large broadside in an edition of 366. Consists of blocks of four-line texts arranged in a pyramid.

Then with a sweep
blindly eradicate
perception itself
afire with egress

JIM LEFTWICH, LEWIS LACOOK, SCOTT MACLEOD

Jim Leftwich, (b. 1956) lives in Charlottesville, Virginia. An enormously prolific poet, visual poet, writer, book artist, critic, publisher and editor, he is producing a body of fundamentally innovative work, much of which does not fit any of the known categories of poetry, criticism, or visual poetry. His magazine *Juxta*, co-edited with Ken Harris, was a key meeting-ground for much of the best experimental writing of its time. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library has the major collection of his papers, manuscripts, correspondence, art work, books, and other material.

Lewis LaCook, (b. 1970) is a native Ohioan who now lives in Richmond, Virginia. Among the poets in this exhibition, LaCook has probably made more use of electronic media than anyone. Much of what he has published, in fact, has been done on websites, listserves, email media, and the like. His extensive and energetic output is characterized by a unique innovative lyricism and passion.

Scott MacLeod, a writer and performance artist from San Francisco, became active in several genres starting in the 1980's. His work has made extensive and varied use of found and appropriated text, which he has manipulated in many ways, to create strikingly original texts. He also makes artists' books using found and discarded materials, and has taken his performance art to venues around the world. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library has the major collection of his manuscripts, papers, books, tapes, and other material.

On Display:

Jim Leftwich. *Dirt*. Columbus: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1995.

Jim Leftwich's first published chapbook, consisting, perhaps, of "prose poems," although no generic designation truly applies to these richly exotic texts. They are aptly titled: *Dirt* as the humus from which a wealth of growth and resonance may arise.

milk fear by smoking the rubber fish. sprouts stalk the medieval
disintegrations. bee as text, a scroll of stairs, folded behind the cutlass
tenure. broad pulp of wire. bush secrets engrossed in ocean bust. bounce
uttered spill of lethal chess. scalp caul spliced the wine.

Jim Leftwich. *Letter Trellis*. Charlottesville: Juxta, 1966.

A long poem with line breaks, rather lyrical and surrealistic.

errors our crusts neighbor challenges likened clouds juiced white
acceptable battles over honeysuckles
hind image suddenly comes budding with four sacred hurls
upreared in warnings reply you turned
in your answer came
showering souls finally here your
mysterious fascination

Jim Leftwich. *Sample EXample: Visual Lyrics*. Columbus: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1998.

A selection of several of Leftwich's modalities in visual poetry, including collage, mixed media, hypertext and overlays, "vitrines," and others. The cover is a conceptual piece: the front cover reads "1. Do something that I can think of as art." The back cover reads "2. Do something that I cannot think of as art."

Jim Leftwich. *Improvisations Transformations*. Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 1998.

Poems and texts, using a variety of disjunctive and elliptical techniques, on occasion slipping over into an apparent glossolalia. All words acquire new meanings and resonances as a result of these recontextualizations.

sewer gins. your sung flour breasts wound mirror
sashes loop delight. semé seed hand. centipoise pun tent urn.
race duration cattle like the flowering moon eye stalks. call
lower roar orbs east. candlepower gigacycle.

Jim Leftwich. *Doubt, 1996-1997*. Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 2000.

Doubt, 1996-1997, is Leftwich's longest and most ambitious published work to date. Part essay, part novel, part epic poem, part meditation on consciousness, time, and being, the work is widely considered an underground masterpiece.

In time the square figure of a somatic site is centered around the urge of the I. The formal targeting of another speech on the contrary both of which are as beautiful as the never possible patience . . .

Jim Leftwich. *Doubt, 1996-1997*. [Manuscript.]

Some pages from the original manuscript of nearly 600 pages.

A breath of history thaws the implicit heresy of the text.

John M. Bennett. *Letter to Jim Leftwich*. November 18, 1977.

There is an extensive correspondence between Leftwich and Bennett. In the letter on display, Bennett discusses some of his initial impressions on reading *Doubt*.

. . . I've never read anything before which so convincingly works in the realm of counter-ideas to express their opposites, so that their "real" meaning occurs in the reader.

Jim Leftwich. *Visual Poems*. [1999].

Several colorful visual poems of the thousands Leftwich has made. Those on display use collage, mixed media, words, paint, handwriting, and rubbings.

Jim Leftwich. *Hinge*. [1990's].

Concrete or conceptual poem or art object, consisting of a rusty hinge in a metal tea box with the word "Hinge" written on the inside of the lid. Is "hinge" a word or an object? Is this a book about hinge? Or is it the book of hinge?

Jim Leftwich. *Cut-up Text Collage*. [late 1990's].

Several collages made with fragments of photocopies, printouts, or handwritten texts taped down on colored paper in patterns. Most of the source material is Leftwich's own work.

Jim Leftwich/Jeffrey Little. *Gnommonclature*. Columbus: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1996.

A collection of collaborative poems and texts. Leftwich, like many avant-garde writers, collaborates extensively with other writers and artists.

banter x if too suspect, float the wires to
silence, signals concealed in codes of mote.

John M. Bennett & Jim Leftwich. *Collaborations. 1996-1997.*

A group of visual collaborations between Leftwich and Bennett. In these, Leftwich provided most of the printed material; Bennett most of the calligraphic elements.

The
poet is an
economical web,
rider

Jim Leftwich. *Letters to John M. Bennett and John High. [ca. 1997-1998].*

Leftwich maintains an extensive correspondence with other writers, in which he discusses, often in great detail, the work and innovations of his own and others' work. In the two letters on display he discusses his essays, his and Bennett's autobiographies, influences of Rimbaud and Breton, his own work, *Doubt*, and other matters.

I wonder about this "Leftwich" character . . .

Jim Leftwich. *Croaker Norge. 1995.*

Unpublished manuscript of a work combining textual and visual elements. The visual elements include hair, onion skins, paint, dirt, and burnt paper.

Lewis LaCook. *Cling. Oysterville, WA: Anabasis, 2000.*

A long poem written in chapters, characterized by an urgent, erotically charged surrealism. This poem forms part of a larger work, *Debilitating Sugar*. Sheila E. Murphy has said that LaCook has created "a new romanticism of the intellect."

Your dress exploding. Your eyes your lips your matriarch a
harmony can't stitch I'm casting light instead In prowls that
vent those hours you doubted strangle you, open Your flowering
doors slowly The moon's iced spaceship-silver higheeled blending

Lewis LaCook. *Internet Publications. 2000.*

Lewis LaCook distributes much of his work through websites and e-mail. On display are printouts of some of the latter: 2 versions of *Yum!*, *Debilitating Sugar: Selected Poems, 1997-2000*, and a poem posted on the WRYTING listserv.

Scott MacLeod. *Anne Frank in Jerusalem. Typescript poetry version, 1996.*

Anne Frank in Jerusalem is a work MacLeod developed over several years, through several versions. Of this 1996 poem, he said in an accompanying letter, "the enclosed manuscript . . . is pretty much totally lifted from numerous sources other than my own brain." MacLeod has made extensive use of recombinant appropriated text as a literary technique.

now dark hut, sleep and angry voices, territorially extensive
flooded with proofs, instinctively, slip into a bitter reveille
or at least the skeleton, the scaffolding, of fire, invitation
to seizure, ferocity's abominable homage, knives, scissors
and surgical instruments, early disasters, on this particular page

Scott MacLeod. *Anne Frank in Jerusalem. Manuscript prose version with source material, ca. 1995.*

Source material is marked, and includes material from "Eichmann," "Hesse," and others.

Scott MacLeod. *Anne Frank in Jerusalem*. Typescript, 1998.

Typescript of final version, with a letter to Jim Leftwich. MacLeod says the work is an “attempt by this character (& me) to engage with memory/emotion/the world through the immediate medium of language, to come to terms with the world using only what the world provides (source texts).”

Scott MacLeod. *Anne Frank in Jerusalem*. San Francisco: Ex Nihilo Press, 1999.

Published version of this work.

Inexplicable handfuls, oh scatter away,
at all costs to discard the book . . .

Scott MacLeod. *Work In, Work Out, Work Through*. 1990

One of numerous one-of-a-kind books made by MacLeod that use found and discarded materials as exclusive content. This one includes poems and texts by MacLeod himself, in handwritten drafts, notes, typescripts, and photocopies.

Scott MacLeod, editor and publisher. *Typographical Errow*. Kohoutenberg: The Institute for Study and Application, 1999.

This is “Volume 14, No. 23” of a literary publication focused on poetry by a mysterious claue of poets: Angeliqne Jobelle, Retorico Unentesi, and Batente Queceux.

Scott MacLeod, editor and publisher. *Litterature : a Literary Publication of the Institute for Study and Application, Kohoutenberg*. San Francisco: The Institute for Study and Application, 1999.

This is “Volume 27, No. 6” of a literary journal consisting of poetry and texts by Augen Konne, Matrice Kubik, Anmassend Bekehr, Mitzi Prodding, MacLeod himself, Cosa Lasciarlo, Tim Gaze, Anabasis, and others. Who are these authors? Where is Kohoutenberg? Their ambiguous presence challenges the notion of the isolated, unique, identifiable person as the sole origin of literary art.

ARTISTS' BOOKS

Artists and writers have been making books that are regarded as aesthetic or totemic artifacts in their own right since the early 20th century. This case has examples of fairly recent works in that genre, many of which have a literary aspect. A book, as book, has meaning in and of itself. From the highly ornate to the dazzlingly simple, that meaning is as variable as the artists and their creations themselves.

On Display:

Ellie Ga. *Classification of a Spit Stain*. Rosedale, New York: Women's Studies Workshop, 2000.

Artist's book in the guise of a scientific study of spit and other stains. Like the stains it discusses, the book is rich in textural and textual qualities. Produced in an edition of 25.

UNDERFOOT MATERIALIZATION

- crevice filling
- crosswalk mutations
- decorative elements
(i.e., graphitti)

Henry Martin. *Concerning George Brecht's Void*. Verona, Italy: Archive F. Conz, 2000.

An extensive and opulently produced catalog of Fluxus artist George Brecht's exploration of the word VOID, which he applied to fossils and stones in a considerable variety of ways. The works were produced in 1990.

David Cole and Marilyn R. Rosenberg. *Même*. Cortlandt Manor, NY: Marilyn R. Rosenberg, 1987.

A collaborative book work by two visual poets consisting of a stunning variety of broadsides, small booklets, cards, and other objects in an elegant painted and collaged box. Produced in an edition of 5 with the original prototype residing in the Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry.

**Robin Crozier. *A Little Book About Tom Langford and Pauline Smith and Adolf Hitler*.
Compiled and Edited by Robin Crozier. Sunderland, England, 1975.**

One-of-a-kind book made from mailing envelopes sent to Langford from Smith, a mail artist who conceived the Adolf Hitler Fan Club. The book is wrapped in a photocopied hand made by Smith.

Robin Crozier and Paul Nicholson. *Book Eighteen of Twenty Books*. Sunderland, England: Robin Crozier, 1980.

One-of-a-kind book from a series, consisting of collaborative drawing, collage, and text. Typescript text on cover is cut out of a book by Crozier and John M. Bennett:

He stood inside the room with
no empty space and emptied out
his mind.

Peter Huttinger. *Cut*. Cincinnati: Peter Huttinger, 2000.

This is volume 2 of a 3-volume series called *Primary Books*, produced in an edition of 10. The volume is 500 blank pages, with a sewn and glued binding, and a round hole cut through the entire text block. An abook, or idea of a book.

TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROW



A Literary Publication of
THE INSTITUTE FOR STUDY & APPLICATION
Kohoutenberg

Volume 14, Number 23 • 1999



David Cole and Marilyn R. Rosenberg. *Méme*. 1987.

Baby Nous. *Simple Steps: A Babynous Tutorial*. Bremerton, Washington: The Babynous Cult, 2001.

Baby Nous has produced hundreds of one-of-a-kind and multiple books with a dizzying variety of themes, styles and structures. This one consists of “advice” associated with illustrations of surgical procedures.

be sure that all your jars
are sealed tightly, & that the cat
has had its annual distemper shot.

John Byrum. *Generator 10*. Cleveland, Ohio: Generator, 2000.

An issue of Byrum’s journal of innovative writing consisting of a single sheet of plate glass, through which an extensive list of “people have agreed they are represented.” This is truly transparent literature.

Betty Danon. *Extra Pages*. [Milano, Italy: Betty Danon, 1999.]

Betty Danon, a visual poet born in Turkey, lived and worked most of her life in Milano. She also worked in sound, sculpture, and jewelry design. On display is a portfolio of some of her visual poetry, one of an edition of 30. Betty Danon died in 2002.

Richard Kostelanetz. *One Night Stood*. New York: The Future Press, 1977.

Richard Kostelanetz has been at the forefront of the development of new forms of language art for many decades. This work can be read as a series of minimalist texts, or as a novel laid out in very short scenes, all suggesting an erotic encounter.

I didn’t
Again, later

Julien Blaine. *Je Ne Suis Pas Américain*® . . . Paris: Editions Al Dante, 2001.

Julien Blaine is a widely published visual and conceptual poet, and has worked in other media as well, including performance and found poetry. On display is a work of poems and visual poems with a strong political content.

Je ne suis pas américain®
je ne suis pas européen®
je suis terrien L^{es}.

Davi Det Hompson. *Davi Det Hompson Has Written*. Richmond, Virginia: Davi Det Hompson, [n.d.].

Book consisting of 4 rubberstampings, with the blank lines filled in Hompson’s own hand, each of the 4 handwritten texts differing. Hompson was a Fluxus artist whose primary media were words and language.

Davi Det Hompson has
written _____

on the open lines of
this stamping.

Ficus strangulensis. *Death by Dinner*. Charleston, WV: Ficus strangulensis, 1997.

One-of-a-kind collaged wordart mailart box, sent to John M. Bennett in 1997. Combines pages from the Bible with phrases from newsprint food advertisements, with glitter, other materials and printed matter. Ficus strangulensis is a chemist who, for many years, has explored language and words as artistic media.

Diana Duncan Holmes and Timothy Riordan. *Screw Freud*. [Cincinnati]: Holmes & Riordan, 2001.

This one-of-a-kind artist's book consists of a circular section of Freud's Papers, cut out with a hole saw and held together with a nut and bolt. A dreamed book, interpreting Freud, or simply the idea of reading, as either a perfect (suggested by the circle) or frustrating (suggested by the nut and bolt) experience.

Anita M-28. *A Rearranged Affair*. Chicago: Sara Ranchose Publishing, 1996.

Consists of pages taken from numerous romance novels and shuffled together (in the proper page number sequence) to form a completely different kind of text, each copy being different. The copy on display is signed by the author.

He lifted a hand. "No, let me finish. The
her, but instead it had to be a paradise . . .

Isidore Isou. *Letrizem*. Piran [Slovenia]: Obalne Galerije Piran, Edicija Artes, 2000.

Catalog of an exhibition of Lettrist art, with essays in Slovenian and English on the movement.

Matvei Yankelevich. *Writing in the Margin*. Brooklyn, NY: Loudmouth Collective, 2001.

Essays or prose poems focused on writing and its ambiguities.

When the hand falls asleep
a mark is made on the
page, neither ethical nor
political. What is the name
for it?

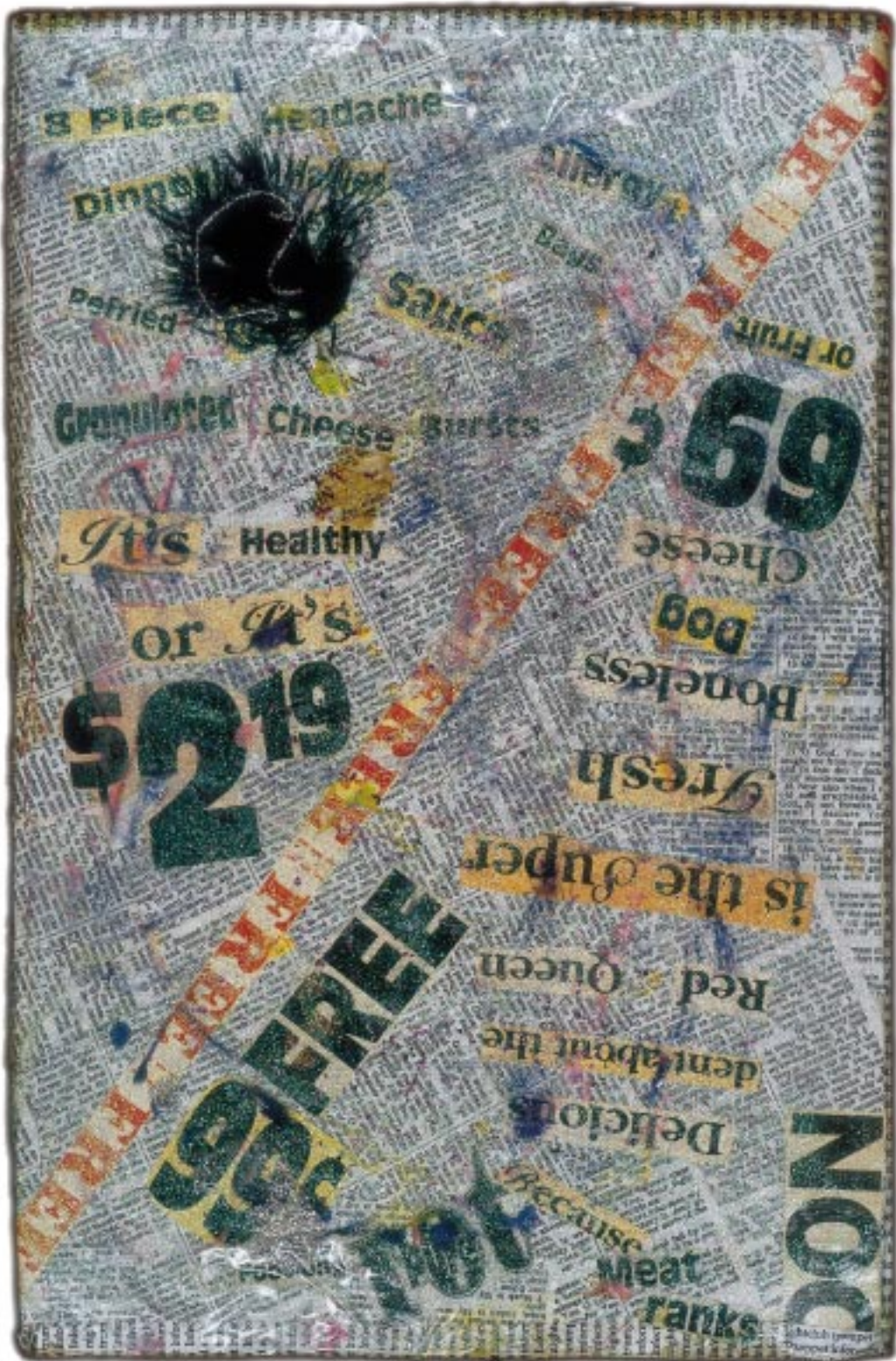
Bern Porter. *Monica Lewinsky, All of Us Want Yours*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Roger Jackson, Publisher, 1998.

The book on display includes lists of expressions associated with the Lewinsky/Clinton scandal. Signed by the author.

**1. You called old Bill
a "schumcko"**

Big Creep
Little Boy
Soul Mate
My Handsome Dear
Gift Giver
Dress Stainer
Pillow Talker
Empty Guy
Slick Willy
Sinner
Sunshine Kid

Davi Det Hompson has
written, "Tonight
I'm going to
try to set a
personal record
by drinking
four glasses
of ice tea in
one minute;"
on the open lines of
this stamping.



Ficus strangulensis. *Death by Dinner*. 1997.

Bern Porter. *Waste Maker, 1926-1961*. Somerville, Massachusetts: Abyss Publications, 1972.

A collection of some of Porter's earlier found text collage pieces. Is this literature? It is, in the sense that the material has been completely recontextualized, and thus acquires the ambiguities, resonance and interpretative richness of a literary text.

BO OM

Pot Pot

Dmitrii Bulatov. *Tochka Zreniia: Vizualnaia Poeziia, 90-e Gody*. Kaliningrad-Kenigsberg: Simplitsii, 1998.

An important anthology of international visual poetry in the 1990's. The anthology includes biographical and bibliographical information on each author/artist.

Paul Lambert. *Final Notice Before Service Ends, Temple #13*. [Portland, Oregon]: Paul Lambert, 2001.

Paul Lambert was the American representative of INI, an offshoot of Lettrism. In the work on display, Lambert resigns that position. His work involves compelling mixtures of text and image. This copy signed by author, with a letter to John M. Bennett printed on inside front cover.

when	with	whom
came	said	show
stay	left	week
over	most	real
sofa	walk	true

mIEKAL aND, *Hypok Changs Trees*. Madison, WI: Xexoxial Editions, 1988.

According to the introduction, this is a "flip-book of Zaum brut lettrism . . . beyond words." Fanciful glyphs, sometimes suggesting Mayan or ancient Chinese forms.

Elizabeth Was. *Compulsively, Spilled*. Madison, WI: Xexoxial Editions, 1984.

A set of cards in a hand-made enclosure, each with collages on both sides. Each collage includes visuals and a single linguistic element. The elements combine to form an elusive narrative.

March Past / dub

Larry Tomoyasu. *Between*. Monterey Park, CA: Found Street Press, 1995.

Autobiographically oriented texts, stories, and collage by a writer who has been extremely effective in combining images and words.

In tornado weather the sheets stay out
to field, curse sudden against the
electrified smell of the sky.

Larry Tomoyasu. *The Malignancy of Machines*. Monterey Park, CA: Larry Tomoyasu, 1998.

Wordless drawings with an enigmatic narrative resonance.

Reid Wood. *Four Small Books*. 1998-2001.

Reid Wood is a practicing mail artist who goes by the name State of Being. He has produced many book-works. This selection includes various mixtures of visual and linguistic materials.

SHEILA E. MURPHY, BLASTER AL ACKERMAN, JOHN M. BENNETT

Sheila E. Murphy (b. 1951) lives in Phoenix, Arizona. Murphy is one of the best known and most widely appreciated experimental and innovative poets in the United States, and her work has been published around the world. She has applied her intelligent, lyrical, and generous voice to an amazing variety of new poetic strategies, elliptical and logoclastic language, and new forms. Her work, grounded in daily life and mind, transforms that life and awareness into a luminous perception of the universe. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library has the most nearly complete collection possible of all her published work in books, chapbooks, magazines, broadsides, and other forms.

Blaster Al Ackerman, a truly underground writer who must have been born around 1940, now lives in Baltimore, Maryland. His literary career grew out of his activity as a mail artist, which often involved elaborate hoaxes using characters that seemed surrealistic or absurd distortions of people from 1930's or 1940's pulp fiction (such as *Weird Tales*). These hoaxes became stories, and the stories are wonderful, strange, compelling, gruesome, and riotously funny all at the same time. Ackerman is also a poet, and a practitioner of "Hacks", which are transformations of others' texts using a great variety of arbitrary and lunatic schemes. The results are amazing.

John M. Bennett (b.1942), who lives in Columbus, Ohio, often speaks of himself in the third person, as is the case here. Poet, visual and performance poet, critic, mail artist, and publisher, he has always treated language as something almost material in its essence, while at the same time using it for metaphysical ends. One of America's most widely published poets (both here and abroad), he is at the same time invisible to the general reading public, a situation that applies to most of the writers in this exhibition. His arrogant youthful goal was to change the language. Some would say he has succeeded in doing this. He has certainly introduced a wealth of new or evolved forms and processes into poetry, such as transductions, reversals, labels, and others. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library has a nearly complete collection of everything he has published in books, chapbooks, magazines, recordings, broadsides, exhibition catalogs; reviews of his work; and much other material.

On Display:

Sheila E. Murphy. *Breathpoints*. Florence, AL: 9th St. Laboratories, 1994.

From the broadside series, *The Experioddicist*, published by Jake Berry.

Living elemental moments lifted into share drafts
Of eternity each instant each slow pitch
Soft finger melded into cognizance

***Offerta Speciale*. Anno 3, No. 5, 1990.**

Italian avant-garde literary journal edited by Carla Bertola. This issue includes two poems by Sheila E. Murphy, in English with Italian translations.

Sheila E. Murphy and Peter Ganick. —*Ocracy*. 1997.

A long collaborative poem published in three volumes by three different presses:

Parts 1-4, Norman, Oklahoma: Texture Press;

Parts 5-7, Port Charlotte, FL: Runaway Spoon Press;

Parts 8-9, Salt Lake City, UT: Nominative Press Collective.

From Section 9:

construction (paper, worker) owns enough cement within the word to be
configured, or its guessive (on his sticky note he wrote "best guest")
letters in advertisements have weight, some of them vibrant,
some a stunned skim milk, isosceles, i don't know chemistry from baldness

Sheila E. Murphy. *Immersion Tones*. Columbus, Ohio: Luna Bisonte Prods, 2000.

Some of Murphy's most innovative, boundary-stretching work.

When these thoughts have been emulsified,
there will be wood to find among the altarcloths.
And single-story filaments will drive the ransom writers
crazy with undoled indulgences.
The rim will leave the curly rock and just go home.
The simulacrum will not seem affordable again.
And mirrors will have splintered true to form.

Sheila E. Murphy. *Teth*. Tucson, Arizona: Chax Press, 1991.

Sheila Murphy compels repetition, invites it, precisely because what she repeats is an action, the sitting down with the mind alive to all that's around (and to a human mind much of "what's around" will sound abstract but is as present as the pepper) as here her "Impala/parked halfway in drive" becomes as thought about yet another Transcendental as in Emerson emblem.

— *from the introduction by Gerald Burns.*

This is one of Murphy's most important books.

here where thought culls
chaste ink blank enough
wash brim gleam clear through
razor
shift the neutral balance
hear me speak
to self unmet

Sheila E. Murphy. *A Clove of Gender*. Exeter: Stride Publications, 1995.

A major collection of Murphy's poems, including a large selection of haibun, an adapted Japanese form that she has explored deeply.

My politics bear no resemblance to repeat signs. Laugh tracks feel
wonderful when each joke seems between sizes. That kind calamity and
docents indigo assist someone. Essential information.

Vanity plates, gross prison products, paint along the inside of white line

Sheila E. Murphy. *With House Silence*. Exeter: Stride, 1987.

One of Murphy's earliest full-length collections, this one consisting of haibun.

SIESTA
Threads of sugar in the system distance me from mazes I have lived within,
a frightened sheet stretched peaceward. Thin lipped, I lean away, although
convinced of shelter welcomed, prodigal soft insect wings exhausted from a day of taunting skin.
Good graces of an animal, endangered species.

Palaver tied to wish fulfillment, silence, bend of my left elbow

Sheila E. Murphy. *Falling In Love Falling In Love With You Syntax: Selected and New Poems*. Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 1997.

Murphy combines an extraordinary level of literary experimentation, daring, and playfulness with an absolute honesty, clarity of vision, intimacy, and comprehensiveness in one of the strongest, clearest, and most distinctive voices writing in English today. "I write like a sieve accepting rinse travelling through lightspeed. Retain only the moisture then the thought of flow."

— from an afterword by John M. Bennett

Furled new whitened episodes elapse until white stones of us
attract some moss sheet rock plantain. Remarkable new
curfews sentence us to hip deep death.

Sheila E. Murphy. *The Truth Right Now*. San Diego, CA: Bakhtin's Wife Publications, 1988.

A chapbook that shows the transition between Murphy's earlier, more "accessible" style, to her later more innovative and experimental modes. Murphy is a poet who continues to evolve and explore new territory.

I am a lightbulb always on
With an opinion about
Darkness, bedsheets, bookbinding

Sheila E. Murphy & John M. Bennett. *Milky Floor*. Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1996.

Murphy has collaborated extensively with many other writers, including several of those in this exhibition. This cassette recording includes Murphy and Bennett each reading their own and each other's works, and both reading some of their collaborations.

***Rampike*. Vol. 8, No. 2. 1997.**

An issue of the influential Toronto-based literary journal edited by Karl Jirgens which includes work by Sheila E. Murphy, Ryosuke Cohen, Philippe Sollers, Jürgen O. Olbrich, Hank Lazer, Opal L. Nations, Fernando Aquiar and many others.

I'm momenting Louise won't come to clean us *ever*. See: I'm hitched to
trophies outside of the land bid and the sofa and ungluing of the shove
off mostly gridlock would oppress.

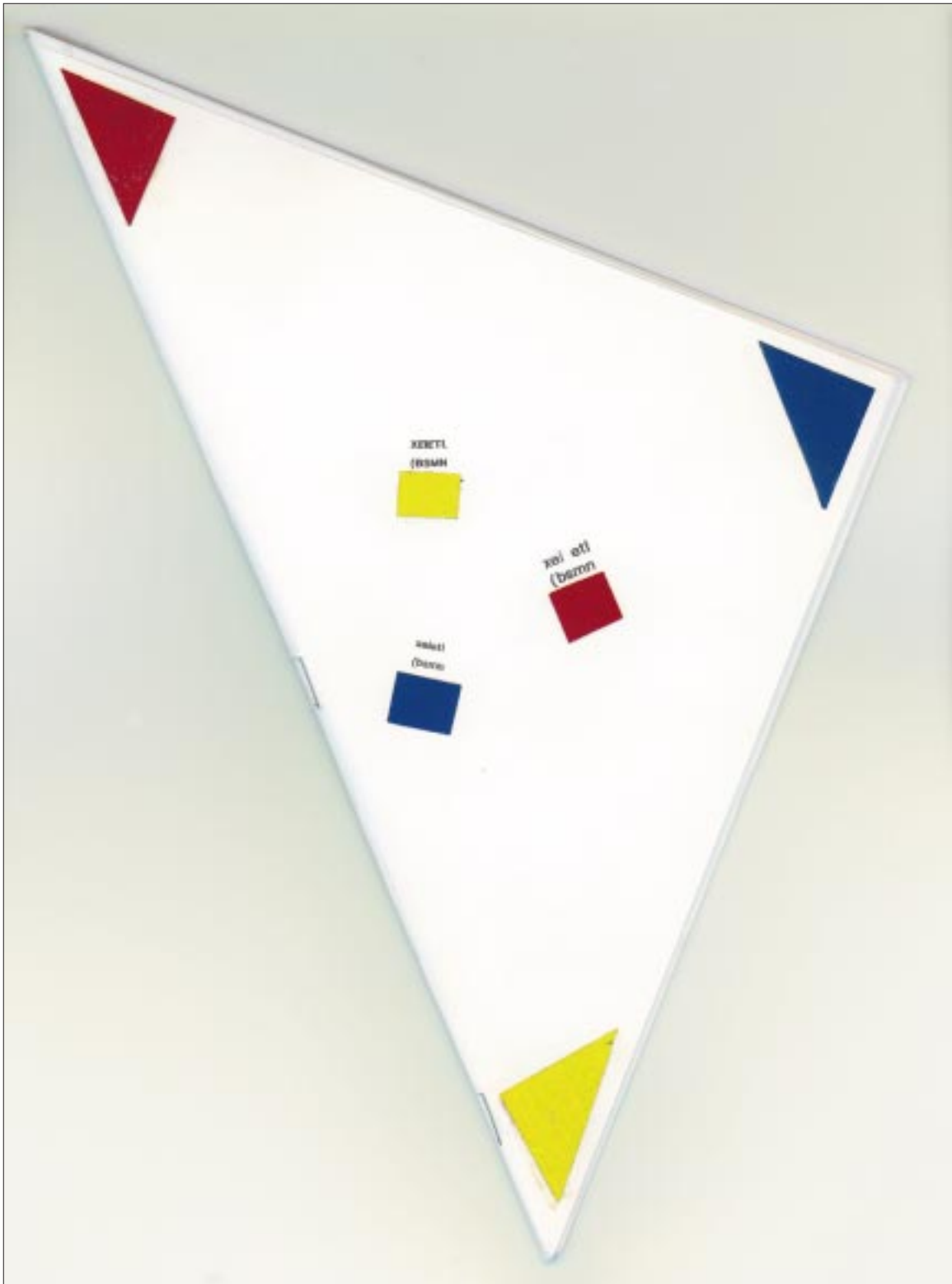
– Sheila E. Murphy

***Le Jardin Ouvrier*. No. 21. Juillet: 1999.**

Issue of a French avant-garde literary journal that includes 3 poems by Sheila E. Murphy in English with experimental French "transe-lations." This issue also includes work by Georges Bernanos and Lucien Suel, among others.

La surprise est la char de l'inconscient
Dépannant cerveau avec des roses pour remplacer l'émoi
Et un train miniature fait la pub

– Sheila E. Murphy



eXpeRimeNtaL basEmeNt, No. 1, 1991. [Sheila E. Murphy Poetry Collection]

eXpeRimeNtaL basEmeNt, No. 1, 1991.

First issue of a magazine experimental in its design and layout as well as its content. Includes work by Sheila E. Murphy, John Byrum, G. Huth, Crag Hill, John M. Bennett, S. Gustav Hägglund, Jeffrey Little, Jake Berry and others.

Literature has punished white-
boards short of
(Qualities of)
Nonetheless

– Sheila E. Murphy

Al Ackerman. *Blaster: The Blaster Al Ackerman Omnibus*. New York: Feh! Press, 1994.

Al Ackerman began his literary and artistic career as a mail artist and very quickly evolved into one of the 20th century's most unusual and startling writers and poets. His story-telling, derived from mid-century pulp magazines, mail-art pranks and dodges, humor, chance operations and other shadowy surrealist devices, is an unique and deeply compelling body of work. On display is his first major compilation and includes many of his classic tales, letters, and other writings, including "The Jiggling Men Mystery," and "2,197 Vienna Sausages."

Plopman . . . found the stubby, slippery little franks devilishly
tricky to keep a grip on, it took him a long, hard time to stitch his
suit together. About two years, all told.

Blaster Al Ackerman. *Let Me Eat Massive Pieces of Clay*. Baltimore, MD: Shattered Wig Productions, 1992.

A collection of Ackerman's poetry, with cover and other drawings by the author. Highjinks of a transcendent nature; "not ideas about the gobbling but the gobbling itself."

The time comes when the chicken shack beckons
When we look into those mild eyes and see corn,
And that orality . . .

Blaster Al Ackerman. *I Taught My Dog To Shoot a Gun*. Schenectady, NY: Popular Reality, 2000.

A collection of stories, including "Blind Ka," "Eel and the Haunted Ice Box" (which was made into a film by Steve "Sleaze" Steele), the title story and others.

The second smartest thing I ever did was teach my dog to shoot a gun.
I'll tell you why.

Al Ackerman. *Ack's Hacks: Radical Transformations of John M. Bennett's "No-Boy" Poems*. Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1984.

For years, Ackerman has been subjecting Bennett's and others' poems to various arbitrary or automatic rewriting processes, called "Hacks." This is a collection based on combining Bennett's poem with the likes of James Thurber, François Mauriac, Rainer Maria Rilke, Paul Valéry, Maurice Maeterlinck, Charles Lamb and other unlikely sources. Ackerman's explanations of his techniques are included.

What we see upon a shirt is keys and
bodily knobs; what we are conscious of
in vomitting is almost exclusively
the sleep, and its shirt.

Al Ackerman. *Meetings with Improbable Dangles: The Poets Meet John M. Bennett.* Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1998.

More "Hacks" of Bennett's work, with an introduction in the form of a letter to Ackerman's friend, poet Gerald Burns, who died in 1997. In this collection Bennett is blended with Walt Whitman, Charles Simic, Wallace Stevens, Ethan Frome, Robert Frost, W. S. Merwin, Octavio Paz, Kenneth Fearing, Gerald Burns, Stephen Spender, and others.

Who need be afraid of sausage?
I like to pronounce it so it almost sounds like "satchel",
And am fond of pulling my lips clear back when I do....and when I say
Undrape....stop this dripping nostril up with milk
And you shall possess the origin of all phone sex,
You shall possess the gland to sneeze her speaking axilla...

John M. Bennett. *Three Early Books. 1976-1978.*

John M. Bennett has been publishing poetry since the early 1960's; the works on display are examples of his early mature styles: *White Screen: Poetry and Graphics*. New York: New Rivers Press, 1976 (poetry, visual poetry, and conceptual poetry); *Meat Watch*. Columbus, Ohio: Fireweed Press, 1977 (poetry and collage); and *Time Release*. [Columbus]: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1978 (a "conceptual narrative").

A MAN WITH A TOOTH IN HIS FOREHEAD

MIRROR MENU

John M. Bennett. *Meat Dip: 15 Labels.* [Denver, CO?]: Laughing Bear Press, 1976.

A selection of the hundreds of such labels hand-made by Bennett with rubber stamps. These works are complete when they have been stuck to something.

FOOT MEAT

Blade, Rubber, Flamingo Torque
Insertion Rating

John M. Bennett & C. Mehrl Bennett. *Applied Appliances.* Columbus, Ohio: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1981.

A small book of collaborative poems mimicking a technical manual.

I stuck my head inside the furnace
and screamed at the pitch black ants.

John M. Bennett. *The Spitter.* Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1985.

Cassette recording of Bennett reading some of his anaphoric series of poems. Accompanied by a 1984 manuscript of some of the same poems, assembled for a reading in October of that year.

John M. Bennett. *Blanksmanship.* Columbus, Ohio: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1994.

A long poem in 10 cantos; "A Poem of Nothing Knowing." Published as a book with a cassette tape including both a studio and a live performance of the complete text by the author. The performance included sound art by Jim Wiese.

Was slipping next the furnace, so's feets aimed in,
waves of (flamey current toward the chakra top leap;
Ah's) nuture's chanchred, not unique at (all glows in
a) globe of ratted hair with a fire within ...

John M. Bennett. *Fish, Man, Control, Room*. Jackson, MS: Semiquasi Press, 1995.

A series of poems, some of them with an anti-title at the end.

(He's seated, crumpling's pages . . .
"like I read back me", (muttered rages . . .

PUBLICATION

John M. Bennett. *The Seasons*. Peterborough, Cambs., England: Spectacular Diseases, 1997.

The title poem is a sequence titled by the four directions: North, East, West, South.

(In the couch-mouth's sunk) "where the slurred
speech thinks of me" and the walls churn in's snow
thought . . .

John M. Bennett, Tom Furgas, Dave Clark and Walter Drake. *Pod King: Uttered Thought Climatology*. Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1992.

Cassette recording of 2 collaborative works. Bennett performs his poetry with music and sound art, and plays saxophone on one side.

John M. Bennett and Mike Hovancsek. *Autophagia*. Kent and Columbus, OH: Pointless Music and Luna Bisonte Prods, 1993.

A collaboration of poetry and sound art. Cover is a photograph by Mary Albrecht written on by Bennett.

Jim Clinefelter. *A Throw of the Snore Will Surge the Potatoes: John M. Bennett Meets Stéphane Mallarmé*. Columbus, OH and Portland, OR: Luna Bisonte Prods and Whitewall of Sound, 1998.

A series of "Hacks" by Clinefelter, using as source material poetry by Bennett and Mallarmé. The latter poet made a deep impression on the former in his youth.

IT EXISTS

otherwise than socks of scattered spray

John M. Bennett. *Bare Moon*. [Zwirn, No. 3]. Portland, OR: Whitewall of Sound, 1976.

Designed by Jim Clinefelter, this is a series of short poems. Rubber stamps were made of Bennett's calligraphic originals and then stamped on old maps and other printed matter to form pages.

hand around you faceless
daughter blue pond and

John M. Bennett. *Milk*. Columbus, Ohio: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1990.

A group of short poems, none longer than a few short lines.

Ears showing like the sores I kept

John M. Bennett and Reed Altemus. *Yr Cream Dip*. Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 2001.

A series of *décimas* (a 10-line Spanish form) and other short poems accompanied by recombinant responses by Altemus. Altemus' poems were created using chance operations on Bennett's originals. Can you tell the difference?

ticking angle clutter the
yr brimming in prow water
crows pass out lake



John M. Bennett: Johnee's Box: 1990.

John M. Bennett. *Johnee's Box*. Columbus: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1990.

A limited edition collection of chapbooks, broadsides, postcards, labels, tape recordings, a calligraphic hat, and other material. The item on display is no. 1 of 15 produced.

John M. Bennett. *Letter to Jim Leftwich*. October 23, 1994.

The letter on display discusses the ethical implications of the process, practiced by both poets, of "paying attention to the (perhaps) random patterns that cross one's path (or that one throws down on it)." Includes a pair of reversal poems. In this case the poems are written normally and then again, "backwards, tho not *exactly* backwards."

John M. Bennett. *Tacky Little Pamphlets*.

Scattered throughout the display case are many of the hundreds of TLPs that Bennett has made over the years. Most of the TLPs are collaborations with other writers or artists including Cesar Figueiredo, Robin Crozier, Serge Segay, Scott Helmes, Rea Nikonova, Jim Leftwich, Thomas L. Taylor, Litsa Spathi, Karl Young, *Ficus strangulensis*, Don Boyd, and many others. Some of these tiny books consist of work by other writers, such as *Lost Coins* by Edward Lense.

Or Anger
household word arranger
yr plate. a laundry!

– Vittore Baroni and John M. Bennett

Robin Crozier, John M. Bennett. *The Chapters: 1980-2001*. Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 2002.

For over 20 years, until Crozier's death in 2001, Bennett and Crozier collaborated on a series of "chapters," collected here. The early chapters were exclusively textual, but gradually evolved into highly visual forms toward the end of this life-affirming and enduring collaboration.

John M. Bennett. *Neuf Poèmes, Choisis et Traduits par Philippe Billé*. Lyon, France: Les Éditions de Garenne, 1992.

A selection of Bennett's poems in French translation.

Ma main sur la table où
Mon pont devrait être mon
cul sur la chaise où
non air devrait être ma

Dmitry Bulatov, ed. *Experimental Poetry: Selected Articles*. Kaliningrad and Mal'borg: Simplicity, 1996.

In Russian. Articles on international experimental poets and poetry, including Bennett, Hartmut Andryczuk, Grygory Galantai, Rea Nikonova, Stéphane Mallarmé, and many others.

Anna Boschi, ed. *Libri d'artista e Poesia Visiva: 280 Artisti, 28 Nazioni*, Castel S. Pietro Terme, Italy: Comune di Castel di S. Pietro Terme, 1998.

Elegant exhibition catalog of a show of artists' books and visual poetry. Among the Americans, the show included work by John M. Bennett, Reid Wood, Karl Kempton, Marilyn Damman, and many others.

DOC(K)S, été/automne 1991.

Issue of the French avant-garde literary journal edited by Julien Blaine. The issue on display includes work by John M. Bennett, Blaine, Susan Smith Nash, Tom Raworth, Uwe Warnke, Franco Beltrametti, Pierre Garnier, Hugo Ball, and others.

. . . I wrestled my/voice, but it's
shrouded in cud

– John M. Bennett

John M. Bennett. *Mailer Leaves Ham*. Berkeley, CA: Pantograph Press, 1999.

Full-length volume of poetry, entirely written in 1996. According to Sheila E. Murphy, Bennett's poems "form transromantic moments via repetition, fractal shifts, and concentrated stutterance. He alters the magnetic field's due process, shattering predictability in language."

heaver spatter) hurled off's finger inhalation ("barking")
through the bone lubrication dental dam your milk or
leg slippered in my ham's stack bed . . .

John M. Bennett. *rOlling COMBers*. Bedford, Massachusetts: Potes & Poets Press, 2001.

A full-length selection of poetry written 1997-1998. The poems use a great variety of techniques designed to change the language and create multiple layers of simultaneous expression. According to the jacket blurb, Bennett "has uncompromisingly introduced polyphony into English-language poetry."

like yer fLOCKed Log bEnEath the bed oR Leg reducED
to mERely pANTS aROUND the bathROOM stAIRs your
bIOCK of TeETH what fOUR dICE? cLOGged the dRAIN

THOMAS L. TAYLOR, MICHAEL BASINSKI, WILLIAM T. VOLLMANN

Michael Basinski (b. 1950) lives in Buffalo, New York where he is Associate Curator of the important Poetry/Rare Books Collection at SUNY. Poet, visual poet, and sound and performance poet, he has often combined the three genres in his work. The same piece can be read, viewed, or performed, and be just as rich in meanings and textures in all three forms. His lively and compelling work is widely published and instantly recognizable.

Thomas L. Taylor (b. 1938), who sometimes goes by the name Anabasis, lives next to the Pacific Ocean in Oysterville, Washington. Poet, essayist, visual poet, photographer, and publisher, he has produced a copious body of idiosyncratic and sometimes unclassifiable work that has expanded the possibilities of literature. Taylor's work is characterized by a unique mix of autobiography with a use of language as a means to obtain some kind of spiritual transcendence, as if the act of writing itself were a kind of expanded consciousness. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library has the major collection of Taylor's manuscripts, journals, books, photographs, visual poetry, and other material.

William T. Vollmann (b. 1959) lives in Sacramento, California. Rare among the writers in this exhibit (with the other exception being Richard Kostelanetz), Vollmann has been published in the mainstream media. His work, however, displays some of the same influences as many of the others. Especially notable is the resonance of William S. Burroughs' diction and of some of his characters, if not of his cut-up techniques. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library has the major collection of Vollmann's manuscripts, books, and papers.

On Display:

Thomas L. Taylor. *The One, The Same & The Other: The Semeiology of Consciousness*. Sacramento, California, 1972. [manuscript]

One of Taylor's early major works. Written in a kind of prose-poetry unique to Taylor, this work in 20 parts is poetry, essay, autobiography, visionary quest and more.

How otherwise, of continuing, between separations, at this place or moment is but totaled, beyond even that, which has to tell or be . . .

Thomas L. Taylor. *Selections from "The One, The Same and the Other."* [n.p.]: Ghost Dance, 1990.

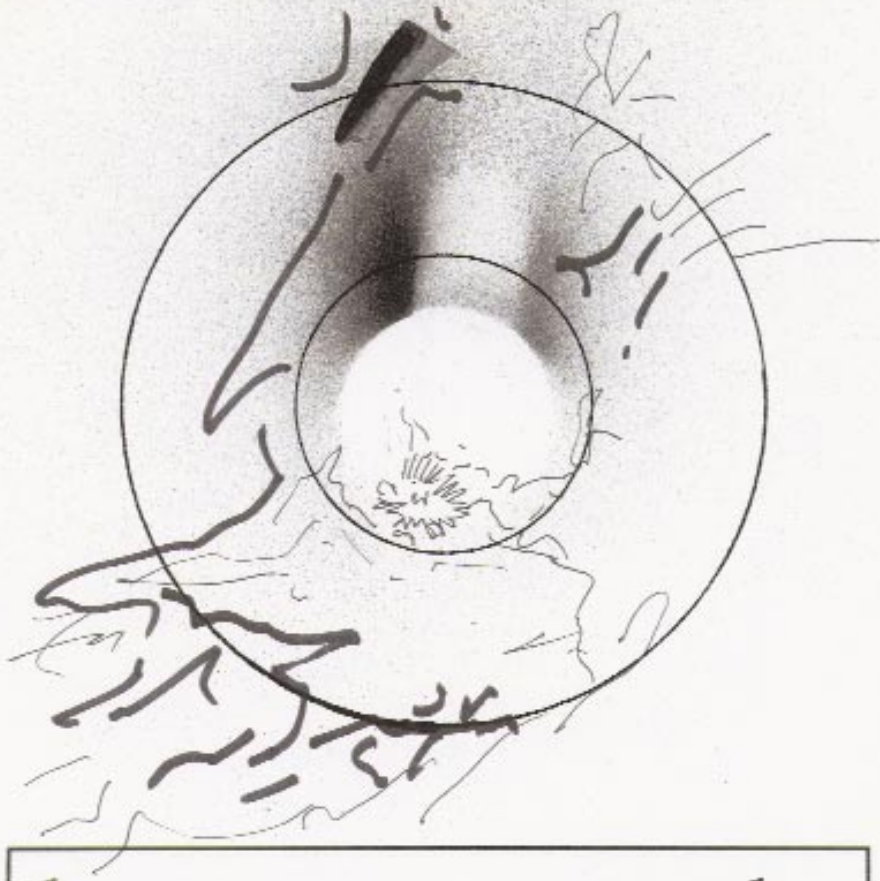
In an introduction to this work, Taylor says:

It is a grammar of events, and as events become poems, it is in that relation that it speaks, hopefully, to the emptiness of the moment and to a hope for the future, that language itself might become a doorway into the new reality, into the new millennium.

Tom Eagle [Thomas L. Taylor]. *White Light: The Lost Vision of Montana*. Oysterville, WA: Anabasis, 2000.

One of Taylor's early works, the first part of *The Alleye Trilogy*, that also includes *The One, The Same and The Other* and *Mandala*. Written in the 1970's, this work is a kind of re-visioned autobiography. This copy signed by author.

In the fullness of the moment, river at cross and pattern, "no-interest," in "no-matter," but call her in from the cloud heights . . .



them as soper **spool**
the **fooder** sheals his
pentiant **forder spud**
them *pealers* suckin

Hermetic Series

1995

Thomas L. Taylor. *Poem and Mandala Drawing*. 1995.

3.20.90

Turning after light reveals the sentence, names
the floating places more than some enough.
Holds. Error names them longless figures,
the sense of taste, the raptures of indulgence,
you'd hold around the clock more foreign
Hemlock, or plaid shirts the principle of which
is words glossed overall and joining plenty.
The birds in the wings float withily along
the upper air currents without variety, your
arms waving weakly on the plain below,
shunting upward swinging terms renewal or
appetite would flavor the less abstracted
ideas in pushing on, pushing through, a
looser name for the time you give forgiveness,
to make sure, and thrown but alongside
the road is the more immediate of claims
reduced in "dension" to say the more
linear attributes are not so easily ever
but say these contradictions in the heart
are woe, perhaps, but certainly clear
enough to be refreshing, like clarity or a
nooner in the midst of winter times.
The phrase or airplane slinging out these
dustier realms at play the storm of
silence growing sideways into more organic
forms the cleaver substance adaptive

Thomas Taylor. *Relimn*. Portland, OR: Anabasis, 1991.

Poetry, including some of Taylor's photographs.

"I guess these are not thoughts"
in the terms you remit, but hold
to words from the ether as if you
were not among other substances enough

Thomas Lowe Taylor. *JFK: The Adirondack Diary*. Norman, OK: Texture Press, 1993.

Prose poems or fictional diary entries with strong social and cultural implications. "Kennedy," and language are metaphors for consciousness, or as Taylor often says, "A style is also a behavior."

Fragments, falling, radio falling, on the way to where you kept off from
what, from what's going on, into the eternal light, my heart burning like
there's an eternal fire on it.

Thomas Taylor. *Cosmic Poetics*. Portland, OR: Anabasis, 1991.

Essays written in the 1970's in which Taylor explores, often in a highly personal and subjective manner, various ideas or processes of writing and consciousness.

Naming, then, improves what is difficult. The personal realm is still described in style; or, the elegant pursuit of alterations of the perfect form betray, almost, the secrets of motion relevant to the final arrangements of passage. Surely one is drawn aside, and the light of events pursues thought.

Thomas Lowe Taylor. *Diction, Visionary Education*. [n.p.]: Anabasis, 1996.

Using a mixture of epistolary prose, poetry, and quotations from other writers such as Jim Leftwich, Jake Berry, and Stephen Ellis, Taylor explores language in *Diction* from a variety of directions.

We are, after all, selling little trips in our poems—if it feels good, one lets it in, and that's where syntax is psychoactive. You can tell how it fits and feels so you let it in, and that teaches you to lower your guard to let in new information; this is the messaging of the poem, how it feels in a phenomenology.

Thomas Lowe Taylor. *Diction, Part 2*. Computer printout manuscript [ca. 1996].

Edited manuscript pages of *Diction*.

The poem is in fact an encoded experiential diagram interposed between you and your literacy and the raw bleeding fantasm of the present moment.

Thomas Lowe Taylor, ed. *The Love Project*. Portland, OR: Anabasis, 1993.

One of the thematic anthologies Taylor edited in the 1990's, including poetry, prose, visual poetry and other mixed genres by over 60 contributors, many of them in this exhibition.

Submissions and correspondence for *The Love Project* [ca. 1992-1993].

Folder of submissions of texts for Taylor's anthology, many with notes by Taylor and co-editors Debra Zoe Gahloff, Susan Smith Nash, and Maia Sarah Banks.

Anabasis [Thomas L. Taylor]. *Kilobyte Magnificat*. Oysterville, WA: Anabasis Press, 2001.

One of Taylor's strongest recent works, this long poem includes visual poems, drawings, and photographs by Taylor. This copy signed by the author.

now you've drawn your elbow across the face of what matters and
found time on the side of no single entity in the term of stillness
with which it passes through us, no matter to the place or certainty
of its massage in the wilderness of chance encounters of the worst
kind you found them all around you without diagrams or
instructions in the spaceless term of light we all inhabit.

Thomas L. Taylor. *Magazine You*, #15. [n.p.: Anabasis], 1995.

Magazine You was a limited edition photocopied series where Taylor compiled a wide variety of materials by himself and others: poems, manuscripts, essays, correspondence, printed matter, visuals, and other material. This issue includes poems by Taylor, an essay "Psychology, Language, and the History of Culture," and other material.

You've melt, or me. Again. *He* did without.
But the poem is the body, and its progress
indicates perfume, or, perhaps, a message.
The car parked outside *means* you're here.

Eagle [Thomas L. Taylor]. *Superprose*. [Typescript, ca. 1970's?]

Original typescript. This unpublished work presents Taylor's signature mixture of autobiography, essay, and vision-quest.

All the lines are out. The lateral
drift of centuries carries out the distances
of thought, where the regard of this,
uh, alterity, is a throwback state.

Photograph of Thomas L. Taylor and Vincent Ferrini at the Stonehenge replica in Washington State, August 1990.

Ferrini and Taylor have maintained an extensive correspondence and literary exchange over many years.

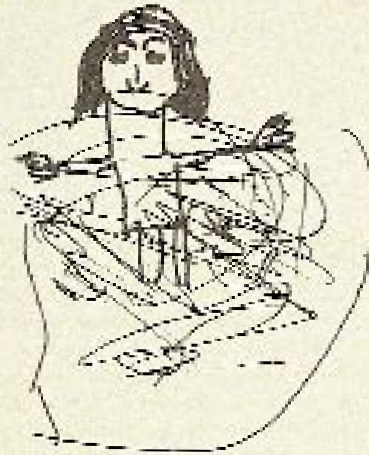
Photograph of Thomas L. Taylor with text [ca. 1990's].

Taylor has been a lifelong photographer and has exhibited his work frequently. He often combines his photographs with text, as here.

The self of light reflection hears his
pincers woolen forms the darker shoulder is
his own leaning forward into the sign of the
times

Thomas L. Taylor. Photograph of hand with text and poem [ca. 1990's].

The poem consists of 3 words spread out in a box: "keaning, SPORE, slinger." The photograph, which, as in many of Taylor's, includes his own hand, is accompanied by a text printed in several colors: "thus no outer doubts/are flone ploward/fumers gaps a turbo/schemes to— light it."



Drawn in my notebook by a ten-year-old Afghan girl — parents awarded by the Soviets

ABOVE THE RIVER

Tinting in the rain with Erica was always the best part. We went all set up, which was a relief, because I was had at that and other things; we were resting, going nowhere, and I could feel as though I were in the Arabian Nights, the tent covered with tapestries and furs, perhaps, with a brazier of incense between our sleeping bags and a silver bowl of dates (actually, we ate them from one of Erica's zip-lock plastic bags), and when she slept she kept on smiling, which made me happy, too — the land of Counterspane was not dangerous at all — we had hours left before I'd have to prove myself again, a good respite to tell each other fantastic stories (the rain being, reliable that way); see Erica told me about being married and climbing the mountain in South America that later got named after her, Peru Erica; and being in the Peace Corps and snoring horses and breaking into people's houses solely to steal ice cream and living with the Navajos and all the other things she had done that left me wide eyed and determined to do things like that (and at the very end of that year, when I was reading the

Thomas L. Taylor. Poem and Mandala Drawing, 1995.

Original drawing with a text printed in several colors, part of Taylor's "Hermetic Series," and signed by him.

them as soper spool
the fooder sheals his
pentiant forder spud
them *pealers* suckin

Thomas L. Taylor. Handwritten note pad, 1980.

Taylor has filled many notebooks and pads with his texts. Some of this material later shows up, edited (or not) in various ways, in his books. This pad opens:

Turning after light reveals the sentence, names the floating places more
than soon enough. Holds.

Michael Basinski. *The Doors*. Calgary, Alberta: Housepress, 2000.

Visual poems, using a striking mixture of expressive handwriting, drawing, and other graphic elements. 1 of an edition of 50.

Michael Basinski. *Fist Shards Of Shamp00: Port OVa poem OF White nOise and numbUrs Ur The Pink Un Bee*. Charlottesville: Xtantbooks, 2000.

Poem in mixed type sizes and fonts. A visual poem that can also be used as a sound poetry performance script. 1 of 25 copies printed.

olt 45 Malt on the rocks, so violent my heart is falling like rainImelt

Michael Basinski. *By*. Calgary, Alberta: Housepress, 1999.

Long poem filled with graphic symbols and word-play suggestive of a secret or archaic language.

yet because each day in Petra archeologist are yet discover title). Ppofm
with two Ps or three-Ps or written 3p o-f-m, if there UR a letter _E_
but

since, scholars from bigfine and presStegasaurus univesttogoths or goats
Thoths shave not yet located that vowel in this ancient text so then it remains,
therefore, is for us here to subsitoot its closet leafving relative the F. seeSea

Michael Basinski. *Strange Things Begin to Happen When a Meteor Crashes in the Arizona Desert*. Cleveland, OH: Burning Press, 2001.

A beautifully produced work combining poetry, visual poetry, and sound poetry. Signed by author, artist Wendy Collin Sorin, and publisher Luigi-Bob Drake in a limited edition of 27.

such as may leg firm valve stenosis tOOorOrturous deep red
cure goose

Michael Basinski. *Letter to Jim Leftwich, August 30, 1994*.

Basinski discusses how his poems are performance pieces, the breaking up of words, the eroticism in words, the textural nature of his poetry, the ego in poetry, and other matters.

I was making things with doors in poems where you could go from one place
to another place in the poem skipping sections . . .

William T. Vollmann. *An Afghanistan Picture Show, or, How I Saved the World*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, [1992].

Although more mainstream than many of the writers and artists on exhibit in *An America Avant Garde: Second Wave*, William T. Vollmann is still an inveterate experimenter, not only in style and content, but also in personal immersion into international politics and international subcultures. On display is Vollmann's 1992 "travel" book on Afghanistan, a creative venture that echos with eerie prescience the events of a decade later. Included in the display are working notes, drawings and early and late typescripts. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library of the Ohio State University Libraries is the repository for the vast majority of Vollmann's literary archives from his early writings to date.

SERIALS, BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Starting in the 1960's with the advent of inexpensive duplicating and copying technologies, there has been an explosion of small press journals and publications. These range from funky home-made zines to finely designed and produced journals, to, in recent years, electronic publications. Whatever the medium or design values, these journals, chapbooks, books, broadsides, and other publications have created a fertile ground for the evolution of a new literature. On the walls or on poster stands are displayed enlargements of printouts from the WRITING list, including work by Allen Bramhall, Alan Sondheim, Lewis LaCook, Joe Keenan, John M. Bennett, Solipsis, and Johan Meskens. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library has an extensive and growing collection of all these exciting materials.

On Display:

***Unmuzzled Ox*, 26, 1989.**

Michael Andre has edited and published this literary and cultural journal, often focusing on Beat writers and their associates, for many years. The issue on display was edited by Charles Henri Ford, and consists of No. 10 of Ford's 1929-30 magazine *Blue*. It includes work by Harold Norse, Andrei Codrescu, Allan Ginsberg, Charles Plymell, Paul Bowles, Edouard Roditi, Anne Waldman, William S. Burroughs, Jonathan Williams, Valery Oisteanu, Ira Cohen, and others. This copy signed by Ford.

Somebody is showing the strands, long-haired caressing
icicles on the rooftops
Somebody is throwing, without any noise
Mountains of strawberries, with their skin slashed
Through their skin you can see the statures walking on
their animal feet

– Valery Oisteanu

***CLWN WR*, 23, 1980.**

Previously titled *CLOWN WAR*, this is a closely edited literary journal published by Bob Heman. This issue includes work by John M. Bennett, John Perlman, Lyn Hejinian, Bob Heman, Cid Corman and others.

sharing the toy
and all-some banana

– Lyn Hejinian

***Perspektive*, 42, 2001-2002.**

Perspektive is a German avant-garde literary journal that has contributors from around the world. This issue includes work by A. di Michele, Camille Martin, Spencer Selby, MEZ, Solipsis, John M. Bennett, and others. Some of the work is accompanied by highly non-traditional translations.

[hover the wretched uterine tomb
(o stars and bars and rifle-butts)
klan ashes pulverized further one last cindering
(abort the dixie stain, upper lefthand cornier)
this museurn of cornpone and tears]

– A. di Michele

***Xerolage*, 17, 23, [n.d.]**

Edited and published by Elizabeth Was and Miekal And, *Xerolage* consisted of photocopy art in single-author issues. These two issues include visual poetry with photocopier manipulations by Geof Huth, and the Afro-centric visual poetry of Bill Keith.

mMmMmMmMmMmMm

Mater @ a(rou

)nd @ addeard

gravidy p00ls

wwwWhWwWwWw

- Geof Huth

Shattered Wig, 10, [ca. 1993].

A free-wheeling journal of outrageous writing, surrealism, and humor edited by Rupert Wondolowski in Baltimore. This issue of *Shattered Wig* includes work by Al Ackerman, Eel Leonard, John M. Bennett (including an interview), Jeffrey Little, Cliff Dweller, John Eaton, Sheila E. Murphy, Dan Raphael, Mok Hossfeld, Wondolowski, Jake Berry, and many others.

How long ago
every mountain
was a boxing glove
- Cliff Dweller

"Look again, Lurcher," grated Ling. "This thing you've been calling the White Bat-
DOESN'T IT REALLY LOOK LIKE A GIANT BURRITO STANDING ON END?"

- Al Ackerman

Koja, 1, 1996.

A journal of experimental and visual poetry edited by Mikhail Magazinnik, Inna Mattei, and Igor Satanovsky. This first issue includes work by the editors, and Michal Basinski, Raymond Federman, Richard Kostelanetz, Dennis Saleh, Spencer Selby, Irving Weiss, and others.

March bride the groom
Kill bugs the spray
Bell toll the wed
Sky land the grey
-Mikhail Magazinnik

Pavement Saw, 1, 1994.

Edited by David Baratier, this journal of innovative writing is now published in Columbus, Ohio. The inaugural issue included work by Robert Perchan, Tony D'Arpino, Chris Stroffolino, Sheila E. Murphy, and others.

Speaks direct like a bullet shot
By an expert marksman who can't tie his shoes
Unless he feels comfortable arriving barefoot
At the opera everyone goes to only to be seen.
It has the ring of truth in it
Until it takes us off the hook.

- Chris Stroffolino

Remixspone Categoriarray, 1, 1993.

An invitational anthology edited by Nico Vassilakis and Noemi Maxwell whose contributors responded to a number of themes proposed by the editors. Bound in wood and heavy rubber with screws, this issue of *Remixspone Categoriarray* includes work by Sesshu Foster, Sheila E. Murphy, John M. Bennett, John Perlman, Thomas Wiloch, John Byrum, Surllama, Charles Borkhuis, Bob Grumman, Fagagaga, Spencer Selby, Ficus strangulensis, Elizabeth Was, Malok, Miekal And, Jim Clinefelter, Harry Polkinhorn, Joel Lipman, Vittore Baroni, Robert Fitterman, Jim Grabill, Tom Beckett, David Cole, and others.

this is a sonnet called
otherwise a looming
spells thee a mess got
what sin is—part fit
part fused like the end
of time’s own problems

– Robert Fitterman

Poethia: Writing-online, 2, 2001.

An email magazine, edited by Peter Garnick, Annabelle Clippinger, and James Finnegan. This issue includes work by John M. Bennett, David Fujino, Ivan Argüelles, Camille Martin, Mark Peters, and others.

Police arrived.
Former glory.
Foam rubber.
Talented chef.
Even potatoes.

– Mark Peters

Crayon, 1, 1997.

The premier issue of *Crayon*, an avant literary journal edited by Andrew Levy and Bob Harrison. It consists of a Festschrift for Jackson Mac Low, and includes a CD with Mac Low’s sound poetry and other works inspired by or dedicated to him.

image ungraspable	grand signal or whim
phantom of life	nameless anarchy
key to it all	rejecting a name

– Dave Baptiste Chirot

Caliban, 7, 1989.

Caliban, edited by Lawrence R. Smith, brought together highly innovative work by a remarkably diverse group of writers of all “schools” and persuasions. This issue includes Antonio Porta, Philip Lamantia, Jim Harrison, Breyten Breytenbach, Marjorie Perloff, Ivan Argüelles, John Stickney, Cliff Dwyer, John Taggart, Ira Cohen, Richard Kostelanetz, John M. Bennett, Guy R. Beining, Robert Desnos, Raymond Federman, George Kalamaras, Gerald Vizenor, Carolyn Stoloff, David Ignatow, Tom Whalen, Jack Anderson, and many others.

blood of a bird
rolls with a car’s tire tracks
expanding myth under cover of forest.

– Guy R. Beining

that summer 33

They floated past the peas and corn, the leader says, his voice turning her cheek. Then she smiled and mouthed me for gas money or burned hoses of hungry lions.

He bought a well-used motorcycle, took a four-page questionnaire to all the family and friends. As for the well, he reached for the dial, but stopped when the melody was putting me to sleep. I speculated that he was sick or, more until police arrived. When it was the bus with a bounce in his step.

A few others agreed. "Yeah, you beat-up '54 turquoise-and-white eyes fixed on each other. At the end of the words, "I love you." It was a great taste. In language class I learned that the perfect grades has big dreams: given by student volunteers.

But at that moment I hated him. out to him, but he spins out of her reach.

LOST & FOUND TIMES

the rag-hands in holds of meat and stone

Designed by [unreadable] (unreadable)

38

Lost and Found Times, 38, 1997.

***Juxta*, 1, 1994.**

Juxta, edited by Jim Leftwich and Ken Harris, was a groundbreaking serial that in many ways defined or gave focus to the connections between a previously more scattered group of writers. The first issue included John M. Bennett, Sheila E. Murphy, John Crouse, Cheryl Townsend, Hugh Fox, Scott MacLeod, Ann Erickson, John Noto, Thomas Lowe Taylor, Jake Berry, Marcia Arrieta, Crag Hill, Bob Grumman, Susan Smith Nash, John Perlman, Michael Basinski, Spencer Selby, Harry Burrus, Mark DuCharne, Will Alexander, Peter Ganick, Dennis Barone, Nico Vassilakis, Paul Green, Peter deRous, Andrew Joron, Taz Delaney, M. Kettner, Lindsay Hill, John Byrum, and others.

Source of wings scissors laminae of air, my thoughts cut
swaths nevertheless holding with simple claw grip unreason,
stellar winds pulse not of air but magnetic echoes,
don't you want to change your perceiving mind?

– Susan Smith Nash

***Lost and Found Times*, 38, 1997.**

Published and edited by John M. Bennett since 1975, *Lost and Found Times* has focused on North American and international avant-garde writing, visual poetry, and surrealism with unrelenting enthusiasm. The issue on display, with a translucent “hypertext” cover with wordart by Ficus strangulensis, includes work by Al Ackerman, Stacey Allam, Anabasis, Hartmut Andryczuk, Marcia Arrieta, Guy R. Beining, John M. Bennett, Jake Berry, Gerald Burns, Jon Cone, Luigi-Bob Drake, Greg Evason, Ficus strangulensis, LeRoy Gorman, S. Gustav Hägglund, M. Kettner, Jim Leftwich, Jeffrey Little, J. S. Murnet, Sheila E. Murphy, F. A. Nettelbeck, Dan Raphael, Serge Segay, Spencer Selby, Gregory Vincent Saint Thomasino, Larry Tomoyasu, and many others.

Forms as cloud. Blown faces, resistance. The
breath becomes an iron flag in the silent wind.
Before speech. Fingers, antique. A creaking
inside memory. You can make a fist. So, talk.

– F. A. Nettelbeck

***Loose Watch: A Lost and Found Times Anthology*. London: Invisible Books, 1998.**

A nicely produced anthology of work selected from the first 39 issues of *Lost and Found Times*. The anthology was edited by John M. Bennett, Paul Holman, and Bridget Penney.

make one's blood
the blood

a law violation

sleep

– jwcurry & Mark Laba

***Generator*, 6, 1994.**

Journal of international experimental, visual, and innovative writing edited by John Byrum. This issue includes work by Carla Bertola, Will Alexander, Bruce Andrews, Fernando Aguiar, Sheila E. Murphy, Bob Grumman, Stephen-Paul Martin, Chris Stroffolino, Joel Lipman, Nico Vassilakis, Susan Smith Nash, Dennis Barone, Richard Kostelanetz, John M. Bennett, LeRoy Gorman, Michael Basinski, and others.

cluster this
responsive onward.
conjoin the fluids.

– Nico Vassilakis

6 Poets X 6 Pages, 1, 2000.

An elegant production, bound with a rubber band. Edited by Matvei Yankelevich, each issue has 6 pages by each of 6 poets. The issue on display includes Sheila E. Murphy, Julien Poirier, and others.

break even ocean into one
unbraided stroke left singular
a praise worn sophist razorblade.

– Sheila E. Murphy

Taproot Reviews, 1, 1992.

Published and edited by Luigi-Bob Drake in Cleveland, *Taproot Reviews* very quickly became the most important critical meeting-ground for North American innovative writing. The first issue alone had over 100 reviews of magazines and books, and articles on cut-ups by Thomas Willoch, on Sheila E. Murphy by John M. Bennett, on John Byrum by Tom Beckett, and an essay by Geof Huth.

Fifth Assembling, 1974.

Assembling, founding editor Richard Kostelanetz, was the premier assembling-type publication of its time. It was designed to be “a collaborative anthology of the unpublished and the unpublishable.” Each invited contributor submitted 1000 pages, which were then assembled for each issue. It resulted in a stunning collection of poems, texts, visuals, conceptual art, and the undefinable by writers and artists many of whom are now major figures in the avant world.

Richard Kostelanetz. Arenas Fields Turfs Pitches. Kansas City, Missouri: BKMK Press, 1982.

A work of visual or conceptual poetry in which the number of words on a page varies from 4 to 16. The words’ arrangements (which include the book’s title) make it impossible to determine where each poem begins or ends, which annihilates one of the basic assumptions about literary texts.

DREAMING SWEAT EXPENSE SUN

Richard Kostelanetz. Openings & Closings. New York: D’Arc, 1975.

One of the author’s many collections of experimental, and truly minimalist, fictions. Are the texts in this volume openings or closings?

In the beginning, as I said,
was the end.

Joel Lipman. Provocateur. [Ohio]: Bloody Twin Press, 1988.

Lipman, a poet and visual poet, here presents translitic, or “fake,” translations of collaborative work by René Char, Max Ernst, Benjamin Péret, and Enrico Baj.

My son, Belvedere, marches like an empty scabbard.
My son, Guidon, more decorated than a urinal’s wall.

Joel Lipman. The Real Ideal. Columbus, Ohio: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1996.

A collection of translitic poems, among whose sources are Julián del Casal and Heberto Padilla.

The eclair, held in five fingers, languishing,
little light sinking.

John Perlman. *Anacoustic*. Morris, Minnesota: Standing Stones Press, 1993.

Collection of luminous innovative poems by OSU alumnus Perlman. Edition of 100 copies.

outcast satellite
mirror moon arcing
over island star to
foil heaven endless
freefall voiding flesh

John Perlman. *Seven Poems*. Columbus, Ohio: The Logan Elm Press, 1980.

Handmade letterpress edition of 130, with illustrations by Sidney Chafetz.

dusk
all focus
blank page

luminary

Jeffrey Little. *The Hotel Sterno*. Minneapolis, MN: Spout Press, 2000.

According to John M. Bennett, these "poems are deeply rooted in the swarming materiality of human culture and of the human body."

midnight was nothing but hoops & bladders,
a whispered forecast of impossible escapes -
wiffle balls in a sky full of plastic right hands.

Ficus strangulensis. *fLaming cRust: Visual Poems & Cut-ups*. Columbus, OH: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1999.

Ficus strangulensis is a master at creating visually stunning works using cut-up and re-mixed texts. His sources include popular media, other poets, technical manuals, and much else. The example below seems to have used phrases from John M. Bennett: the text is superimposed over a photograph of a gigantic truck.

pocket like a crack
glandly savored dripping like
slightly formholed you

Clarke Coolidge. *Bomb, with Collages by Keith Waldrop*. New York: Granary Books, 2000.

Considered by some to be associated with the LANGUAGE poets, Coolidge has long been an influential presence among innovative writers.

Bomb of a meticulous wig grease cover
bomb on a shoulder brace
bomb of no threat to take care
bomb of first narrow nose then thunder
bomb out of calabash hoses
bomb blue putrid black pink sundial
bomb with a vomiter's view

Spencer Selby. *Malleable Cast: Series Number One*. Mentor, Ohio: Generator Press, 1995.

Selby is a prolific poet in both visual and textual genres. A large body of his visual work involves found text superimposed over found (or appropriated) images, such as a text on information and spectacles printed over a close-up graphic of a shod foot on a car's gas pedal, or a nattering peroration on the behavior of the elderly over a photograph of 2 women wearing blindfolds.

Bob Grumman. *Of Manywhere-At-Once: Ruminations from the Site of a Poem's Construction*. Port Charlotte, Florida: Runaway Spoon Press, 1990.

Bob Grumman has been a tireless promoter, publisher, and critic of new and experimental literatures, as well as an important poet in his own right. His Mathemaku (mathematical haiku), for example, are widely known and admired. *Of Manywhere-At-Once* is a book-length discussion of how he wrote a single sonnet, but along the way he identifies and discusses new categories of literature, and includes extensive critical examinations of many of his colleagues in the avant world.

Bob Grumman. *Letter to Jim Leftwich, 22 November 1994*.

A letter, with Leftwich's notes written on it, in which Grumman presents and disusses a "Cryptographiku" (a poem including numerical code), and talks about academic and LANGUAGE poetry in the context of Leftwich's and Ken Harris' magazine *Juxta*.

a full wish of a moon
lingering without effect
in the 23 8 5 1 0 0

Peter Ganick. *<a'sattv>: For the Bloodless Ones*. Tucson: Chax Press, 1999.

A long poem in 8 parts, that, according to Sheila E. Murphy, "integrate social and political observation, lyricism, and linguistic invention" in a highly charged hypertextuality. John M. Bennett says, "here is what goes on inside the mantra, which is present in the poem's rhythm and flow, in its grounded drone or continuo."

as th reason for was only language old
nova lesson the slaphappy innocence
tingle th crisis of fringe appearance

Peter Ganick. *Poem-book-One: Poems and Illustrations*. Elmwood, Connecticut: Front Pictures Artist Books, 2000.

Poems with the author's painted visual text versions. 1 of an edition of 6, signed by Ganick.

predicated gainsaying the rallying point,
deeply that which whose allotment waver
downtime's streets,
flying around in silence's time
waits with name formed on landing

Peter Ganick. *[Flavor]*, Manuscript, 1997.

Manuscript of a book of erotic poems called *Flavor*, sent to Don Hilla at 3300 Press, who sent it on to Jim Leftwich, a co-editor of 3300 Press at the time. In a letter to Hilla, Ganick says, "I don't think I could write any more poems like these."

manly from the start
over a beer and water
news as text is for concentration upon
the aspects regurgitated by his students.

Vincent Ferrini. *Magdalene Silences*. Bedford, New Hampshire: Igneus Press, 1992.

Ferrini, a friend of Charles Olson, has been a poet on the forefront of literary innovation for many decades. His voice is unique, passionate, and fully engaged with language and life.

this writing on the air
 is not what it looks like
Heaven & Earth are really together

the rare meat of emotion
 the veins of social issues
the tongue & the wand of unions

Vincent Ferrini. *In the Arriving*, original typescript, 1954.

Eight-page poem "Fr Olson by Vincent."

you
 the intent
 |
the elbows that ground
the paddles in the massive
Atlantic night
we, like a driven wooden
sliver
 in the belly of that
 whale

Crag Hill. *Trains Slay Huns*. Mentor, Ohio: Generator Press, 1990.

Homophonic "translations" (what John M. Bennett calls "transductions") of English-language poems into "parallel" poems, also in English. Hill is a visual poet and tireless textual experimenter.

And their dim noose never shun.
And their builds are fleet and fair.
And their ways are tilled with horns.
It is internal splinter there.

– translated from William Blake

Dick Higgins. *Classic Plays*. New York: Unpublished Editions, 1976.

More poems or sound-poem scripts than dramatic works, these playful pieces by Fluxus writer and artist Dick Higgins also make significant use of their visual arrangement on the page for their effect.

 electronic
 i need
 electronic
joy
 electronic
 i need
in my electronic
 dark kingdom

Jackson Mac Low. *20 Forties: 20 Poems from the Series "154 Forties" Written and Revised 1990-1999. Gran Canaria, [Spain]: Zasterle Press, 1999.*

Poems of 40 lines each, with instructions on how to read each one out loud, an important consideration for Mac Low, much of whose work is sound-oriented.

Ohio crops' dependable space of discomfort funneling sleep
into cantering sarcasm squinting and tenuously singular
narcoleptic versions of longing selves' despair
whose lonely fluids seize us amid our glory dripping wet and intelligent as any homily
heating the earwax all over again
interrupting corruptible time-bombs

Henri Chopin. *Poésie Sonore Internationale. Paris: Jean-Michel Place Editeur, 1979.*

This essential and comprehensive anthology and study of sound poetry has an introduction by William S. Burroughs, who says "the lines separating music and poetry, writing and painting, are purely arbitrary." It is safe to say that every artist and writer in this exhibition subscribes to that idea.

John Byrum & Arleen Hartman. *Utter. Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 1995.*

Collaborative visual texts, in a signed limited edition of 30 copies.

ink puddles in
slippages among
condensation &
pants to itch notes

John Byrum. *Context Combind, manuscript, [ca. 1996].*

Camera-ready layout and mockup copy of visual or conceptual text which was published by Juxta Press.

C O N
T E X T
C O M
B I N D

Ivan Argüelles. *Looking for Mary Lou: Illegal Syntax. San Francisco: Rock Steady Press, 1989.*

A collaboration with photographer Craig Stockfleth, whose photographs face each poem. Argüelles' earliest work was deeply grounded in European and Latin American surrealism; he has gone on to produce a unique corpus of some of the strongest poetry being written in English today. *Looking for Mary Lou* won the William Carlos Williams Award in 1989.

ANTI-MINIMALIST MANIFESTO

because I am against the exploitations in banana republics
because I also employ both negative and positive european culture
to manifest this opposition hailing the albanian avant-garde
the romanian struggle to destroy with insect repellent the old guard
the salvadoran struggle to eliminate the wild liberating angel of the BIBLE
the protestant blackened angel the pentagon angel with eight hooves
because I interpret this century as that of cathode ray terminal

Ivan Argüelles. *Madonna Septet*. 2 vols. Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 2000.

One of the longest poems in any language, this 865-page epic/lyric/surrealist/mystic text is one of Argüelles' greatest accomplishments. Harold Norse says Argüelles is "the most outstanding poet since Ezra Pound for intellect, epic sweep . . . and sheer magnificence of language . . . mind-boggling indeed. Inebriating."

I am immense with the unlimited Ecumene!
it is what I cannot be unless
"I have her"
prefers not to share information
inch by inch the sound comes back
whitening in the interstices between breath

Ivan Argüelles & John M. Bennett. *Chac Prostibulario: A Collaboration*. Columbus, OH: Pavement Saw Press, 2001.

Argüelles and Bennett are both multi-lingual, and this book-length collaborative poem makes full use of those skills. It is perhaps a glimpse into the future language of the Americas. The work was written in a few month's time through email exchanges.

Richard Kostelanetz, in the *Small Press Review*, said *Chac Prostibulario* "should be ranked among the masterpieces in [the long-poem] genre."

congrío sweet chi chis like flags or / / diccionarios / / and
all was streaked was aguado agujero grime of pallid palabreo
tanto comb sin dientes but tu combado and I slept against,
drained a headache, was a "flaucet", was your humid one

has náhuatl wet dream, tyres spinn navel hoss, hard sleep '
membering nombres a capella with width in span of tenedor
forked over night \ by a spin of marineros in overjol ! pinche amarillo

F. A. Nettelbeck. *Americruiser*. Los Angeles, California: Illuminati, 1983.

Nettlebeck has worked outside literary establishments for many years and created a unique, yet distinctly American poetry that partakes of several avant-garde traditions. *Americruiser* was written on a bus trip across the United States.

persona take apart

a heart,
a structure;

to worship a plastic
child
in the black
desert.

"they will kill you
for that remark"

F. A. Nettelbeck. *Bug Death*. Santa Cruz: Alcatraz Editions, 1979.

Bug Death is regarded by many avant-garde critics as one of the great classics of underground non-mainstream poetry. This copy signed by the author.

half sleeping visions
of a
strange new city

handguns women
rotting on the
video tape

"step on that bug"

F. A. Nettelbeck. *Curios*, Manuscript, [ca. 1970].

Handwritten notebook containing the first draft and model of what became the author's classic *Bug Death*. The cut-up style of William S. Burroughs resonates in Nettelbeck's unique voice.

Let chance
et, cdan
so "holdce
speak. the
man holds a
dead baby +
check spee
ch ck pee

***Co-Labor-ative Writing*. Cleveland: Burning Press, 1990.**

Edited by jwcurry and Luigi-Bob Drake, this is an anthology of examples and discussions of collaborative writing, something practiced in various ways by almost all the writers in this exhibition.

What was ended was the waiting, standing next a
pit of elbow grease as literally figurative as
chrome or glasses tilted off a nose
refined as an expiration date or new coiled hose.

– John M. Bennett & Sheila E. Murphy

K. S. Ernst. *Belles Lettres: Workbook, 1979-2001*. Farmingdale, NJ: K. S. Ernst, 2001.

A series of 22 workbooks containing Ernst's ideas for concrete or visual poems and for many other kinds of wordart. Each book focuses on a particular theme or medium. This is a one-of-a-kind printout from an enormous computer database, and includes an incredible wealth of ideas, sketches, photographs, and documentation of completed and imagined work.

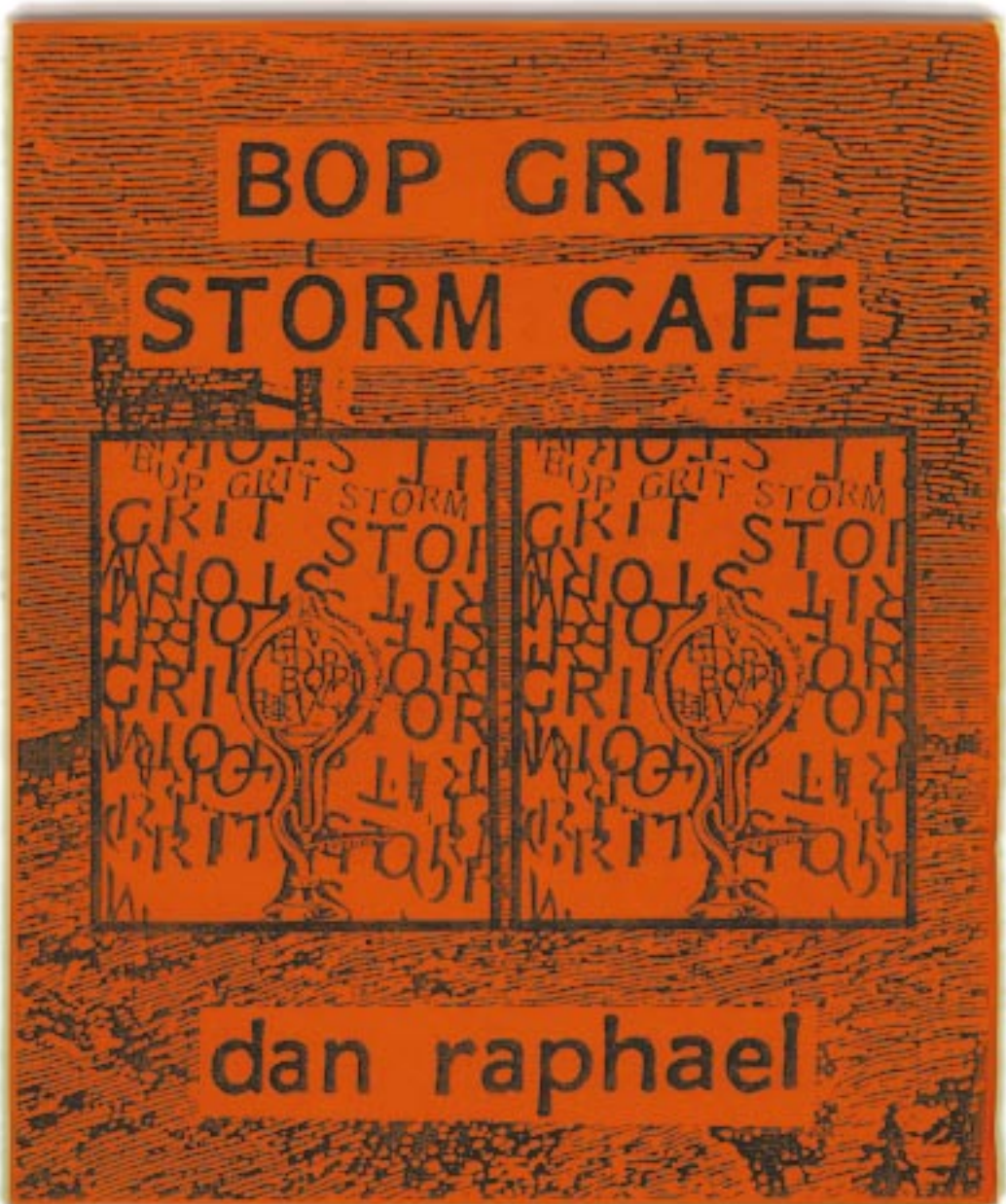
Flip-Flop Poem

Have two (or more) poems that work together on
pieces of foam core (or something light -- balsa?).
Have each piece in a separate chamber in a box. Air
is blown through the chambers, whirling the foam
around. The chamber must be narrow enough so
that the pieces remain relatively straight horizontally
across it or else there must be some way to affix the
foam pieces to an axis so they whirl around it. Have
the fan blow for a short while then stop, so a new,
random poem is created.

The foam pieces could be multisided.



Jeb Acá. *Visual Poetry at the Atlantic Center for the Arts*. 2001.



Dan Raphael. *Bop Grit Storm Cafe*. 1985.

Jeb Acá. *Visual Poetry at Atlantic Center for the Arts*. Farmingdale, NJ & Columbus, OH: Press Me Close and Luna Bisonte Prods, 2001.

These works were created during an intensive 3-week session by a group of writers including John M. Bennett, Josh Carr, K. S. Ernst, Pat Greene, Bob Grumman, Scott Helmes, Richard Kostelanetz, Hesse McGraw, Michael Peters, and Fred Young. These writers are proof that the human creative genius does not exist in isolation, but is a protean and complex process involving multiple kinds and sources of consciousness, in this case emanating from several unique and talented “individual” personalities.

Bob Heman, [15 structures]. [New York]: Incurve Press, 1986.

Heman, editor of *Clown War* magazine, writes generally short, intensely considered, elliptical and enigmatic poems with tremendous resonance.

& words if & when
the mind extends itself
into the other areas of
distortion & recognition
wanting the more of it all
& ready for it if & when

Bob Heman. *Incurve*. [New York?]: Bob Heman, 1981.

Very short intensely suggestive poems

the heart grows hard
& in the hills
voices are whispering

Simon Perchik. *Touching the Headstone*. Exeter, Devon.: Stride Publications, 2000.

Perchik has been producing his innovative, lyrical, & highly personal poems for many years, mixing everyday reality with the deepest regions of consciousness.

It's easy to grow tall, you pee
against a tree and the faintest sound
grinding the sky into puddles, rain
oceans! warmed by relentless waves

Dan Raphael. *Bop Grit Storm Cafe*. LaFarge, WI: Xexoxial Editions, 1985.

Raphael, who edited the influential literary tabloid *NRG* from the 1970's to the 1990's, has published numerous volumes of his full-voiced surrealist declamations. His poems are structured for the body reading them, and have great endings.

the body going both ways at one
the auto headlights that steal your shape
streetcorners baked in a pie
fireplace allergic to what-

the scheming mixmaster the amnesiac pillowcase

Dan Raphael. *Showing Light a Good Time*. LaGrande, OR: Jazz Police Books, 2001.

John M. Bennett says of this recent collection that “these are extraordinary poems of daily life, intensely felt and spoken. The poet speaking here is ‘the balancing fire . . . centered so close to home/rising without yeast, accelerating without an engine! All this in a river of charged language and amazing imagery.”

so even with our planets in overdrive
we cant touch or even smell each others breaths we cant hit each other
we're safe
we're totally lost

Ilse et Pierre Garnier. *Le Spatialisme en Chemins*. Amiens: Editions Corps Puce, 1990.

The Garniers have been major international figures in the fields of visual and experimental poetics. This is a major retrospective anthology of their visual work from 1963 to 1988.

Le monde est là présent, mais le poème lui-même n'exprime rien sur lui.
Le monde est dans mes projections.

– Ilse Garnier

Scott Helmes. *Poems, 1972-1997*. St. Paul, MN: Stamp Pad Press, 1997.

This elegant anthology contains a sampler of Helmes' wide-ranging visual poetry. He has used typewriters, rubberstamps, typesetting, and, more recently, computers as his means. Shown is a poem made with a children's rubberstamp set.

square cow
house cow
blue cow
swing cow
street cow

David Baratier. *A Run of Letters*. New York: Meeting Eyes Bindery/Poetry New York, 1998.

Baratier is a poet who has engaged in numerous formal experiments, here presenting letters, written to real people, “to my hearing of how we talked when together and the unsaid sections which our physical presence hinted at . . .”

In transit the phone rings in the trunk of senses, as we know
each other through the unsaid. Knowing our limitations with-
out a measure between, for the definite has been pulled from
us in the plainest words, hollow on the newspaper, downsizing
40 thousand employees at AT&T.

Stephen Ratcliffe. *Idea's Mirror*. Elmwood, Connecticut: Potes & Poets Press, 1999.

An extended, bifurcating meditation on the passage of consciousness through being and language, this long poem achieves an amazing luminosity and focus.

seeing it, the picture itself
on the telephone, window
banging, triangular
interruption, which is where
what happens, two plants (transplanted)
may or may not bloom, as if one
is thinking, the second person
written in the car, illegible
another man, who says
leaving, idea

George Myers, Jr. *Sub-Text*. Madison, WI: Xexoxial Editions, 1987.

George Myers, Jr. published several works of visual poetry and textual experimentation in the 1980's. This work, presented as a kind of fiction, can also be considered visual poetry.



[Elizabeth Was?]. *The Plagiarist Codex: An Old Maya Information Hieroglyph*. LaFarge, WI: Xexoxial Editions, [ca. 1985].

This enigmatic work indirectly refers to the wide-spread practice of using appropriated text and images as source materials, modified or not. Along with collaboration, this is another challenge to the myth of the author/artist as "isolated genius." Mixing brief text with glyphs and images from pre-Columbian codices, this work posits an expanded and multifarious consciousness.

destruction
from
nowhere
and its
double
manifested
the world

Liz Was. *128 Tactical Fighter Wing Flight Kitchen Favorites*. Madison, WI: Xexoxial Editions, 1987.

A collection of tiny booklets, cards and broadsides in an envelope, of which Was says, "I choose to call the contents . . . 'founds' rather than 'found poems' because the letter designations were . . . limiting." "Founds" is also a term used by Bern Porter for some of his work in this genre.

one moan
rain soon
ring fine

Tom Beckett. *Wagers of Synthesis*. Gran Canaria, Spain: Zasterle Press, 1997.

A collection of conceptually oriented poems (from One Hundred Questions: "Are you where I am? . . . Where were you when BLANK?") punctuated by Beckett's genuine lyricism.

Among vocabularies love
invents use for my body
of work lies awake

Miekal And. *Th he superna*. LaFarge, WI: Xexoxial Endarchy, [ca. 1990].

Cover title of this work is "The," a seductive title also used by several others for very different projects, among them Robin Crozier and John M. Bennett. In this case And has created a sequence of found word collages, incorporating some found graphic material. Everyone should write The book.

it
ings
Balanced
 on a hill
 of paper

Carlos M. Luis. *Contraalquios y Peritextos*. [Miami, Florida: Carlos M. Luis], 2002.

Carlos M. Luis is a Cuban-born poet and critic who has produced an astonishing body of experimental and ground-breaking poetry, prose, and visual poetry, often, as in the work in this collection, mixing several languages. This is a non-commercial edition of 50, signed by the author, which in addition, mixes prose, poetry, and visual elements in a true tour-de-force.

F E S T I C I D I O

La lengua atrapada entre dos Rayos X **manus fututrix manus libidinosis** se ensaña entonces en el cuerpo desnudo que aunque nunca parece que no está desviado de ese sitio

oscuro lleno de hormigas que anuncia **The Real Thing** a voz en cuello como si estuvieran asistiendo a la juventud que se pega como el aceite hirviendo dans les yeux fertiles que amazonan más que secretan ese costado oscuro que fluye como una polución

Rotar Storch. *The Quotes of Rotar Storch*. Edited by Miekal And; Introduction by Crag Hill. Port Charlotte, Florida: Runaway Spoon, 1989.

According to editor And, visual poet Storch (1891-1987) "advocated the use of blatant plagiarism" as a form of "counter propaganda." This idea is reflected in this collection, which makes much use of found text and images for collage material. In an afterword, And asks, "how many lives will it take you to say what is yet to be said?" Storch seems to have had more than one.

caae
cabe
cace
cade
caee
cafe
cage

J. S. Murnet. *Saw Leaking Trees*. Elmwood, CT: Potes & Poets Press, 1999.

This is the first of 2 editions of the first book by the reclusive Murnet, who has carefully hidden his or her identity behind a screen of subterfuges. Murnet's poetry combines humor, surrealism, and unlikely juxtapositions of ideas, topics and dictions to create a truly compelling voice.

The rested leakers leaving, glittering stopped
heresy from gleaming such that clocks were pinched for
space again jostled on the ledge the stream twists
below pseudonymous whispers (plausible effects
brain down floor the shale trebled soles liquid)

d. a. levy. *Concrete*. Madison, Wis: Brainwave press, [1965].

A considerable cult has developed around Cleveland poet d. a. levy whose untimely death in 1968 was felt as a great loss by more than one literary and counter-culture community. levy was a poet, publisher, and visual poet, whose work was at times extremely innovative. This is a small collection of his visual and collage poetry.



Date: Fri, Oct 27, 1995 3:30 PM EDT
From: Ninth Lab
Subj: Re: various notes
To: SLeftwich

arctic portals relume inverted ice the littoral occlusions nest
each ether concentric as its inner arabesque the sidereal diablo
annulled by proleptic resin diameters etic devekuth induced
by kinetic vitamin refuse an opaque alphabet entwines
the radial advertisement in lines that tread the veins of force
cast in a vernal amber protozoa horsewhipped into form
laid the blame to Thebes or the razor's irony big motherbang
quarkblood timeless fuck coiled in cryptic numerals of the alphabet
inertia of symmetrical ghosts camouflaged by the calculated shelter of
desires

tyranny is to hold the wheel as fornicator's purse, shadows vexing
the inner kiln hung in horse latitudes, burlesque of the hive,
a neural narrative reflecting history's speechless dance,
legs furiously pumping an oceanic cacophony of coded recollections
monarch's ancient orange, or sulphur moth down in the vessel, south from
a gender traced in the tower's expulsion, subcortical, brooding
salt razored itch sparked through electrical loops, lamp and athanor
anchored limp and dangling in fluted ash, seams splayed in sundown haze
against horizons spray lacerations are the claw's harmony, spelled
in the speaking marrow, lords of tiber and inserted drone, combing
the landscape for an ally, glimpsed spark grown in spit and synapse,
trained to a trellis of empty melody, where the loam of bone spews source
into a bloodstained gulf, and orisons of the lightning flash carve glyphs
into the tongue -
strains of geomancy, and pirated african dancers wound in the serpents
water, taste of rock and visceral anima, taste of liquid thigh

Jim,

Thanks for part 2 of LETTER TRELIS. Christ, what an extraordinary poem,
dizzying to read, like the cosmos bleeding from an open fiery wound. The
new system for lines seems to be working extremely well, and I love the
retinal qualities as well. An ancient ritual brought into the computer, both
in terms of technique and content.

10/27/95

America Online: SLeftwich

Page 1

Guy R. Beining. *Stoma*. New York City: Red Ozier Press, 1984.

Beining has worked in highly unique and innovative textual and visual modes of poetry, and has often combined the two. On exhibit is a beautifully printed selection of his *Stoma*, which is a series of poems running into the hundreds. A limited edition of 100 copies, signed by the author.

what nonsense now is here?
 clams on the edge of the piano
 stools too pocked to sit on
o burn the winter
 shield
the will to whimper
 & bust
i say this with sizable pity.

Guy R. Beining. *Haiku-vu*. Jackson, Mississippi: Semiquasi Press, 1998.

A collection of Beining's signature visual collages combined with his own minimalist texts, which are frequently treated as visual elements in their own right. This copy includes an original signed drawing by the author.

in red rinse
of haloed dream
caked fish of hospital net.

Greg Evason. *Work: A Book*. 91 vols. [Toronto, Ontario]: Blue Sun Productions, 1999-2002.

In 1999, Toronto-based innovative poet and writer Evason "decided to devote the rest of my life to the creation of one book." The plan was to sit down and write one chapter a day, a kind of autobiography, in which the emphasis was to be on the act of writing itself rather than on *what* was to be written. The project continued for almost 3 years, and resulted in 91 thick volumes in which the author discusses the minutiae of his daily life, his schizoaffective disorder, visits to the doctor, and on occasion includes "literary"-like passages and drawings. Originally published in an edition of 10, it was eventually reduced to one copy, which the Rare Book and Manuscripts Library of The Ohio State University Libraries has in its collection.

The last time I took some Dristan was
at 7:00 p.m. last night. It is now 1:56 a.m. I'm
going to take some more at 2:00 a.m. I feel
the need for some.

Bird wing to wind up toy of
yesterday in it's folding feline warmth. Ice
too. I didn't know what as I said it could
become another way of doing things.

Jake Berry. *Brambu Drezi: Book Two*. Berkeley, CA: Pantograph Press, 1998.

Berry is a visionary poet who uses a vast array of means to present his unique mix of archaic and surrealist myth-making and re-making, glyphic visuals, glossolalia, and intense lyrical poetry. The two (so far) books of *Brambu Drezi* are perhaps his masterpiece. Each page is treated as a complex field or map of a new psychic universe.

The dream has murdered the dreamer
 with a key of tongues,
her fingers manipulating the seabed,
and the necklace between her breasts sobbing,
 12 trees in the wound,
 thunder in the west,
I study the heart of Brahma

Jake Berry. *Brambu Drezi: Book 2*. [Manuscript], 1996.

Manuscript pages from Book 2, sent to Jim Leftwich, with original and scanned drawings.

He came to a place where 12 men had been hung
from 12 spiked rods
over each of them a television flickered
their images at various ages

Jake Berry. *Silence and the Hammer*. Florence, AL: 9th St. Laboratories, 2001.

This is a collaboration with photographer Wayne Sides, whose photographs are obliquely and sometimes hauntingly resonant with Berry's prose poems. The book includes a CD in which Sides and Berry collaborate in an aural presentation of the text with music.

I wanted to make the idle relics speak, but when they spoke, they spoke
only words and words only distance us from what they speak. And in
the distance lies everything holy.

Jake Berry. [Email to Jim Leftwich], October 27, 1995.

Printout of an email letter, which includes a section of an ongoing collaboration between Berry and Leftwich. Electronic collaboration is a major new aesthetic medium much used by the writers in this exhibit.

in the speaking marrow, lords of tiber and inserted drone, combing
the landscape for an ally, glimpsed spark grown in spit and synapse,
trained to a trellis of empty melody, where the loam of bone spews source
into a bloodstained gulf, and orisons of the lightning flash carve glyphs
into the tongue -

CÉSAR A. VALLEJO



TRILCE

César A. Vallejo. *Trilce*. 1922.



Octavio Paz. *Vrindaban*. 1966.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

Avant garde art is always extremely varied in its expressions. This is entirely in keeping with its fundamental role in the remaking of aesthetic values, consciousness, forms, and language. Here is a selection ranging from Cesar Vallejo's ground-breaking 1922 *Trilce*, to G. Huth's tiny rubber-stamped editions of very short poems. These materials prove that it is always possible to do something new, unique, and powerful with language, which, along with the culture it communicates and embodies, is constantly changing.

On Display:

César A. Vallejo. *Trilce*. Lima: Talleres Tipográficos de la Penitenciaría, 1922.

The first edition of Peruvian Vallejo's groundbreaking and highly influential full investment into avant-garde aesthetics, enriched, as all of his work, with his uncompromising engagement with the specifics of the human condition.

¿Qué se llama cuanto heriza nos?
Se llama Lomismo que padece
nombre nombre nombre nombrE

Octavio Paz. *Vrindaban*. Genève: Editions Claude Givaudan, 1966.

French translation of Mexican poet Paz' long poem that is also a meditation and talisman on change and permanence. The book was made so the pages, which have see-through windows for parts of the texts, form a wave, further emphasizing the totemic nature of the work.

(J'écris
Chaque lettre est un germe
La mémoire
Persiste en son ressac
Et ressasse son midi)

John Cage. *Diary: How To Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse)*. Continued, Part Three (1967). New York: Something Else Press, 1967.

A free-wheeling, collage-like essay on many topics (social, political, personal, aesthetic) mixed together and thus given equal importance. Published by Dick Higgins' press in multi-colored inks.

Electronics:
reincarnation without hiatus of
death.) **Rembrandt.** We have everything we
used to have. The Mona Lisa's still
with us, for instance. On top of which we
have the Mona Lisa with a mustache.

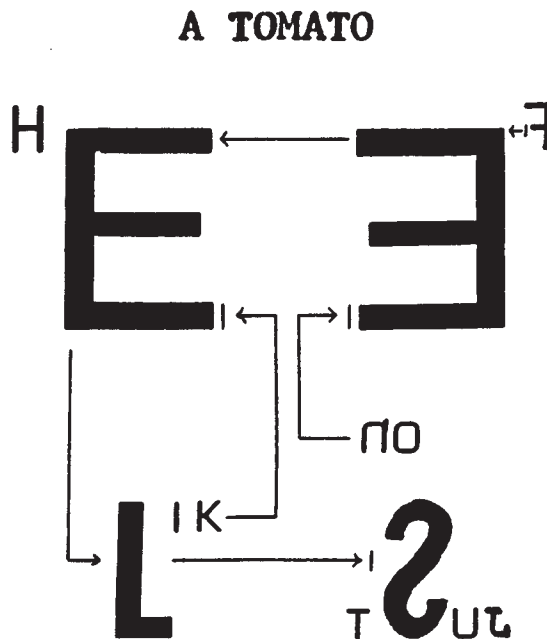
d. a. levy. *The Tibetan Stroboscope*. Cleveland, Ohio: Ayizan Press, 1968.

First edition of one of levy's best known visual texts, using collage, strike-overs, and other means. levy's approach to poetry was quite metaphysical, being a means to attain a deeper, and more humane, consciousness.

Nibbana
IS NOT AN
Air-conditioned Salesroom

K. S. Ernst. *Sequencing*. Madison, WI: Xexoxial Editions, 1984.

A collection of visual poems printed on cards in a box. The texts are presented as complex diagrams, as if they were portraying electrical circuits. In the introduction, Ernst says, "People build houses of cards with words, then go about knocking each other's down on the basis of which cards they used, rather than what perceptions they intended to convey."



G. Huth, ed. *Alabama Dogshoe Moustache*. No. 11. Schenectady, NY, 1992.

A magazine of very short poems printed on recycled business cards in a plastic sleeve, all hand-printed with rubberstamps in an edition of 101 copies. Huth was a creator and publisher of highly innovative minimalist forms in the 1980's and 1990's. This issue includes work by Greg Evason, John M. Bennett, Damian Lopes, and others.

tea
grave
- David Chikhladze

G. Huth, ed. *The Subtle Journal of Raw Coinage*. No. 50. Schenectady, NY, 1991.

This issue consists of words coined by Mark Rose. They have been printed on a narrow strip of paper, coiled with some dental floss and an interdental cleaner, and placed in a small recycled dental floss box.

enenimal
dendiculous

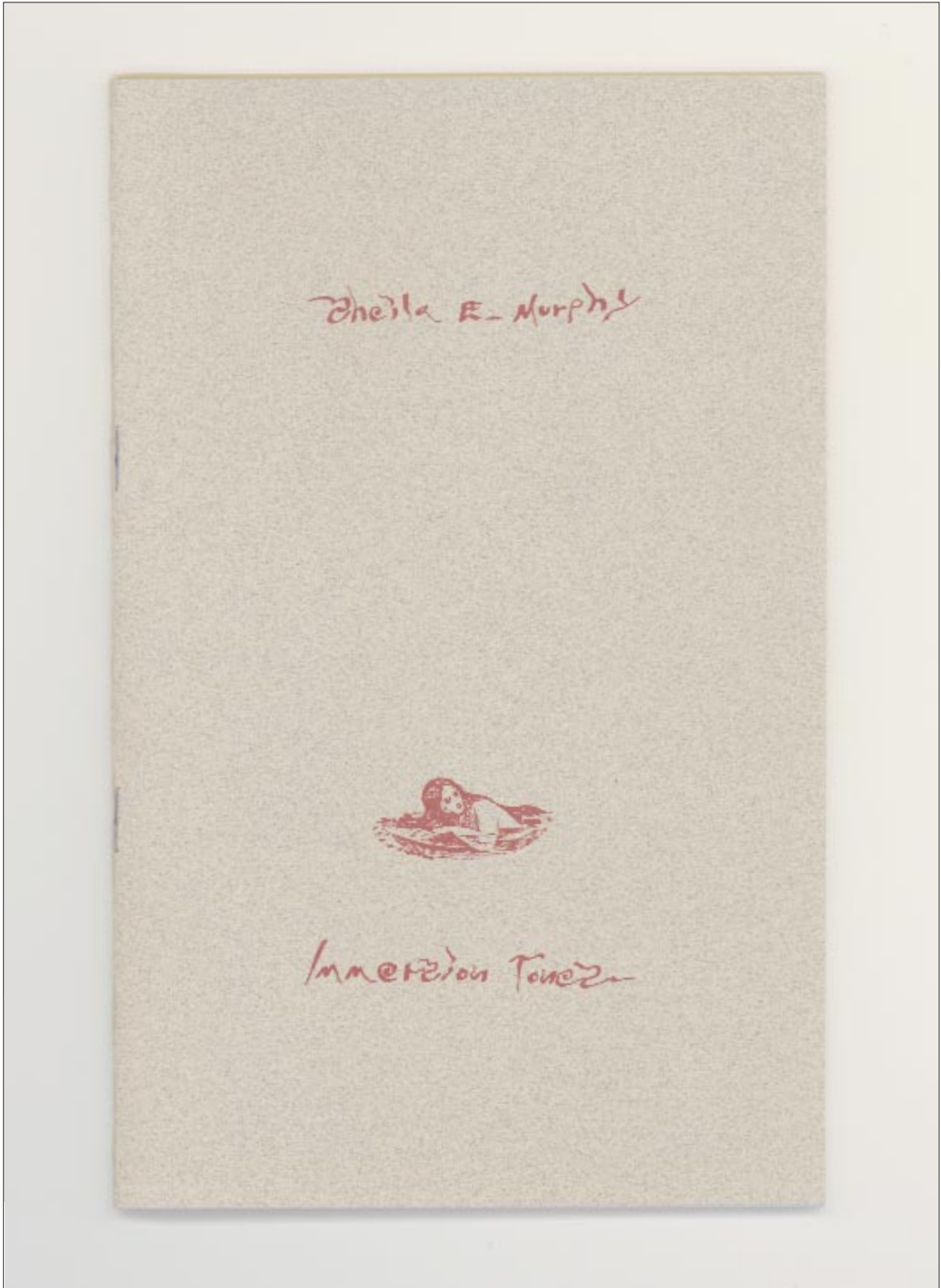
CHAC PROSTIBULARIO



Ivan Argüelles & John M. Bennett

Ivan Argüelles & John M. Bennett. *Chac Prostibulario*. 2001.

BE BLANK



Sheila E. Murphy. *Immersion Tones*. 2000.

