TOUTE PREDICATION EST UN ATTENTAT A LA LIBERTE DE L'HOMME. LA POESIE, COMME JE LA CONçois, N'EST PLUS LA FEMME DE CHAMBRE DES PRINCES, PRELATS, POLITICIENS, PARTIS, OU ENCO- RE DU PEUPLE. "ELLE EST ENFIN ELLE-MEME : UN PHENOMENE" NE PHONETIQUE VOCAL EN SOI DE SOURCE PSYCHO-PHYSIQUE ET OBJECTivement STRUCTURE A L'AIDE DE MOTS, DE sons ET DE MOYENS MECHANIQUES ET GRAPHIQUES (ENREGISTREMENTS ET ECRITURES). "LE VISEUL VERBAL N'EXISTE PAS. IL SUSCITE TOUJOURS LE SON QU LE BruIT DOU IL PROVIENT ET DONT IL EST LE SIGNE." LE POEME EST UNE EMISSION DE RESPIRATION AUDIBLE (AUDITION) OU SILENCIEUSE (LECTURE), CREATIVEMENT MODULEE, PRO- VQUEE PAR LA NEECESSITE DE DI- AUTRE QUA LA SENSIBILITE D' AUTRE. C'EST CE QUE JE CON- JUGUE DES SONORITES VO- CONCERTEE DE VIBRATIONS LA POESIE PHONETIQUE. NE REINVENTION DE LA RECITA- RATION OU LA REGIE DU SON NOUVELLES POSSIBILITES D'EX- ALISER LA TRANSMISSION DE LA SENSIBILITE TOTALE DU POEME, LUI-EME AU FOND UNE PARTIE DU SPECTACLE CINETIQUE TOTAL QU'HENRI CHOPIN PREVOIT PAR L'UTILISATION INEVItable DE LA MACHINE MCE PAR LES ONDES. L'OEUvRE SONORE EST LE RESULTAT D'UN TRAVAIL D'EQUIPE SOUS LA REGIE DU POETE ET LA REPRODUCTION IDEALE EST CELLE REALISEE SUR DISQUE ILF. LA EN- CORRE LA MACHINE EST INDIspENSABLE. CELA VA DE SOI QUE LE RECITAL (SI CE N'EST PAS LE POETE) ET L'INGENIEUR DE DE sons (EN CE QUI CONCERne MES ENREGISTREMENTS) CONTRIBUENT PERSONNELlement A L'ORIgIN- ITE DE LA REALISATION. A L'AUBE DE L'ERE ELECTRONIQUE LA POESIE NE PEUT PLUS ETRE UN FABLIAU."
Words are at the heart and soul of poetry. Whether summoned in hours of deep contemplation, snatched from momentary flashes of inspiration, or allowed to tumble out freely in the absence of conscious intervention, words combine to give a poem shape and substance: in the mind, the voice, on the page. From traditional lines of alexandrine verse to the latest experimental forms, they remain the essential element, carriers of sense, sound, cadence, meaning. So what is poetry beyond words?

The works in this exhibition challenge us to ask that question. How? Not necessarily by leaving words behind, though some of them certainly do this too. Lettrist hypergraphies blast the written word to bits. Not even vowels and consonants are safe in Gil Wolman’s mégapneumes, or the cri-rhythmes of François Dufrêne, or the recording sessions of Henri Chopin. But in most cases words abound, giving shape and substance to nearly all the compositions of experimental poetry here on display. Just as words have always done in poetry? Not quite. Even when they seem to make up the entire poem, words are by no means the only (or often even the primary) compositional element. Typography, layout, color (of ink or paint), even the material supports on which these words appear (paper, canvas, wood, iron, magnetic tape, to name a few) all come into play. But don’t such elements belong to words? Aren’t they simply part of them, an incidental part at that, subordinate but necessary for words to take concrete physical form and hence be read or heard? Well, no. Typography, layout, ink, material supports may be necessary for words to appear on a page, but they can also be deployed for other purposes, even at cross purposes, striking out at words, challenging their sense, altering or entirely subverting their meaning. By taking them up as compositional elements in their own right, experimental poets and artists of the avant-garde ask us to explore possibilities for creative expression in the purely visual, aural, tactile qualities of physical media. They ask us to look beyond words.

The range and diversity of experimental poetry is breathtaking. For more than a century now, the drive to uncover expressive potential in the nonverbal, physical side of the poetic medium has swept across continents and oceans, from Europe to America, Brazil to Japan, giving rise to new movements, forms, and genres along the way. Much as Cubists and Post-Impressionists set the stage for a revolution in modern art by exploring the flatness of the canvas and the physical qualities of paint, experiments with the raw material of printing, handwriting, and (later) voice and sound recording opened the door to a new understanding of poetry by altering perceptions of the nature and properties of language and its media. In fact, the two revolutions were deeply intertwined. Collage, montage, juxtaposition, superimposition, the inclusion of sculptural and performative aspects, found material, film, video, and sound, the predilection for mixed media in general are all common to contemporary art and experimental poetry today. So much so that the line between them, blurry from the start, seems increasingly difficult to draw. In both cases, ripples sent out by explosions at the turn of the

So I judge a poem’s importance, if it is obviously as well conceived as possible, if it is also the most perfect, but above all if it was capable of joining together man and poet, … of becoming flesh and blood, movement and gesture, word and speech, if it knew beauty and started to sing, knew all the possibilities and contained them all (all that which in the end we call spirit) in order to be and remain, departed from out of chaos, the last writing. Only then is it a poem …

Henri Chopin, 1960
Maurice Lemaître, Gil Wolman, and François Dufrêne provide a window on works from the Continent— and on France, Belgium, and Italy in particular— which obscures much that was essential to the European avant-garde. The choice to focus on works from the Continent— and on France, Belgium, and Italy in particular— obscures much that was essential to their composition and meaning. But it also leaves room to explore at least some intricacies of artists and movements that by and large still remain unfamiliar even to connoisseurs. However, most conspicuous of all, the Brazilian concrete poets make only a cameo appearance, and primarily in the role of foils, their massive and global impact on experimental poetry and the postwar avant-garde notwithstanding. Such omissions are glaring. Without collaboration of like-minded artists around the world, the creative expanse of visual and sound poetry during the postwar period is hardly imaginable. A glance at exhibition programs or the pages of avant-garde reviews such as Cinquième Saison, Ou, De Tafelronde, and Lotta Poetica suffices to see the importance Europeans placed on main-tening these global networks at the time. The choice to focus on works from the Continent— and on France, Belgium, and Italy in particular— obscures much that was essential to their composition and meaning. But it also leaves room to explore at least some intricacies of artists and movements that by and large still remain unfamiliar even to connoisseurs of postwar experimental poetry. The works of Isidore Isou, Maurice Lemaître, Gil Wolman, and François Dufrêne provide opportunity to consider the defining role of Lettrism and its various offshoots, relegated to the margins of many existing narratives, in shaping battles over visual and sound poetry in the 1950s and 60s. The crucial alliances of Paul de Vree, first with Henri Chopin and later with Sarenco, emerge from the shadows to reveal the centrality of Belgium in the 60s and 70s. Alongside Sarenco, Lamberto Pignotti, Luciano Carusa, and Ugo Carrega offer a glimpse into the complex, obscure, yet densely populated universe that is Italian poesia visiva. Although a small episode in a much larger story, the span of visual and sound poetry in postwar Europe easily stretches the bounds of a single exhibition.

Bristling with color and texture, sight, sound, and passion-ate fury, experimental poetry reached a particular, heightened intensity in the decades immediately following the Second World War. Technological change played a part in driving this amplification. The widespread availability of microphones and reel-to-reel tape recorders allowed sound poets to explore dimensions of the voice that had never been heard before, teasing out physical properties of breath and utterance beneath the articulation of words in order to manipulate, splice, overlay, compose with them. If the standard typewriter remained a favorite of visual poets, new processes of silkscreen, relief, and stencil printing, and above all the so-called “Mimeo Revolution” in photoduplication vastly extended the reperto-ire and reach of their experiments. But technology only goes so far. Behind the impassioned deployment of these new media lay a desire to challenge the unthinking use of words as reliable purveyors of truth, especially when they fell into the hands of a monstrous regime. The unspeakable trauma of the Second World War resounds in early Lettrist poetry, in the “transhuman” compositions of Altogor, and most persistently through the oeuvre of Henri Chopin, who first learned to savour the raw sounds of the human voice on an infamous “death march” from Nazi concentration camps, surrounded by fellow survivors from Eastern Europe speaking in tongues he could not understand. “After the war we witness the death of language as it was known.” Chopin wrote of the birth of postwar sound poetry: “the ‘Word-Accomplice-of-the-Old-World’ was besieged and broken.” Assaults on the “language of power” only grew more urgent and strident in the works of younger poets like Jean-François Bory. Dismayed by Cold War propaganda, the increasingly sophisticated manipulation of text and image by mass media, the mindless conformity and new wars they seemed to dictate, experimental poets took their anger into the streets. Spelled out in letters the size of human bodies, wrapped in surgical bandages and splatted with red paint, the word “VIETNAM” said it all in Alain Arias-Misson’s first “public poem,” displayed for the benefit of Christmas shoppers on a busy Brussels square. “Poesia visiva is ‘a Trojan horse,’” Eugenio Miccini declared, explaining the strategy of inventing the “iconography of mass media” in col-laged poems: “and it wages war like a guerilla.” The experimental poetry of postwar Europe not only asks, but demands we take a closer look at words, pry into them, beneath them, behind, above, and around them, in or-der to see what they are made of. Only then can we begin to grasp their meaning and explore possibilities that (also) lie beyond them. Drawn from rich archival holdings at Beinecke Library, the works on display tell only part of the story. As we continue to grapple with text, image, and sound in another age of new media and technological revolutions, it seems well worth delving deeper into this past, much as the postwar avant-garde looked to Futurism, Dada, and Constructivism in confronting the challenges of their own day. Beyond Words is an open invitation. Time to start digging.
IN PRINCIPIO ERAT
In the Beginning was the Word, so it is written, but the drive to push beyond it, to seek beauty and truth in abstract configurations, permutations, incantations of unfamiliar sounds seems to be almost as old as writing itself. Dating from the fourth century B.C.E., Greek technopaignia, or “games of skill,” are among the earliest survivals of written poetry that drew significance not only from words, but also from their physical arrangement in patterns and talismanic forms. As prayers and magical incantations, they likely point back to earlier traditions and were in turn passed on by medieval scribes who painfully copied them (and no doubt added embellishments of their own) over a millennium later. Beautifully inscribed in red and black inks, the concentric circles and elaborate arrangement of text in and around a tilted square in this thirteenth-century manuscript evince a fascination for ancient forms of Ars Notoria, the direct invocation of esoteric knowledge, avidly pursued by scholars at late medieval universities and renaissance academies. The “words” themselves consist largely of strange-sounding names of deities, transcribed into Latin from Arabic translations of the original Greek text, commonly ascribed to the first-century Neopythagorean philosopher, magician, and master in the art of making talismans, Apollonius of Tyana. Inspired by examples from antiquity, poets of the Renaissance and Baroque took great delight in composing with shapes and letters, producing a stunning array of labyrinths, mazes, acrostics, lipograms, palindromes, rebuses, proteus poems, and other styles that were all the rage across Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The sober tastes of neoclassicism and Enlightenment reason eventually spelled the end of this extravagant poesia artificiosa, but not before the Cistercian monk Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz compiled its secrets in his magisterial Primuscalamus ob oculus ponens metri metricam of 1663.

Pursued with such giddy abandon by Renaissance and Baroque poets (as Enlightenment critics sourly proclaimed), experiments with the visual, non-verbal aspects of writing fell out of favor in the Age of Reason and did not resume in earnest until the turn of the twentieth century. The renewed fascination with shapes, sizes, configurations of words and letters on the printed page seemed to spring up fully formed, almost out of nowhere. First published in the literary review Cosmopolis in 1897, Stéphane Mallarmé’s A Roll of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance stands alone at the dawn of modern visual poetry, brilliant, haunting, serene, revolutionary, a monument to the Symbolist conjuring of Language unrivaled in its impact on avant-garde experiments with typography and layout for generations to come. “The ‘blanks’ in fact assume importance, strike first, versification demanded it, as silence all around,” Mallarmé explained. With only “a third of the leaf” left for words, font size, placement, and the sheer presence of the material support played a central role in achieving poetic effect across tumbling lines of fragmented verse. “The paper intervenes each time as image, of itself, ends or resumes, accepting the succession of the others.” The effect of this “distance copiée, which mentally separates groups of words or words among themselves,” was to “accelerate and sometimes to slow the movement, the scansion, the intimation even, in accordance with a simultaneous vision of the Page: this latter taken as a unit, as Verse or the perfect line is elsewhere.” Unsatisfied with initial results, Mallarmé worked...
out meticulous instructions for layouts of a large paper edition but died before the project could be realized. It would take another seventeen years for the poet’s “simultaneous vision” to achieve full measure on the magnificent two-page spreads of the 1914 Gallimard edition.

In the beginning was Mallarmé. But new experiments with typography and layout were quick to follow, pushing visual poetry in ever more adventurous and radical directions. Stunned by the dynamic fracturing of the pictorial plane in Cubist paintings, avant-garde poet Guillaume Apollinaire strewed constellations of language clusters across the page to construct his calligrammes, an early attempt at non-linear writing and simultaneity that likewise drew inspiration from the brash concoctions of text and image in modern advertising: “You read the handbills catalogs posters singing at the top of their lungs/There’s this morning’s poetry for you, and for prose there are the newspapers.” Such flights of fancy took Apollinaire far from the serene world of Mallarmé, who condemned newspapers as an “improper use of printing” good only for use as “packing paper.” But the Italian Futurists went even further. Demanding the “destruction of syntax,” F.T. Marinetti launched a “typographic revolution” aimed at freeing words from the straightjacket of sense-making and poetic convention altogether. While Apollinaire’s calligrammes conceal a prescribed sequence and order, Futurist “Words-in-Freedom” defy any single approach, challenging the reader to find his or her own way through a “chaos” of verbal and visual signs held together only by onomatopoeia and intuitive “analogies” formed from the adjacencies of discordant elements. “I oppose

Belgian experimental poet Marcel Broodthaers conveys the profound and lasting impact of Mallarmé’s Coup de dés, translating it from “poem” into pure abstract “image” in this striking reimagining of 1968. Words disappear entirely in an otherwise painstaking recreation of the Gallimard edition, leaving only visual registers of size, shape, and placement in geometric blocks of canceled text. Translucent paper allows not just a single spread, but the entire succession of layouts to shimmer forth in a vision Mallarmé himself could scarcely have imagined. A fitting tribute, in Broodthaers’s eyes, to the Symbolist poet he believed had “unwittingly invented modern space.”

Stéphane Mallarmé, Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hazard: poème (Paris, 1914).

Not just words, but “CONSONANTS VOWELS NUMBERS IN FREEDOM,” the banner of this Futurist manifesto proclaims. With its profusion of mathematical symbols, fractured and distorted words, letters repeated in strings or standing alone like mountain peaks, Marinetti’s 1915 “Montagnes + vallées + routes + Joffré” takes a decisive step onto the battlefield of avant-garde poetry beyond words.
the decorative, precious aesthetic of Mallarmé and his search for the rare word, the one indispensable, elegant, suggestive, exquisite adjective,” Marinetti fumed. “Moreover, I combat Mallarmé’s static ideal with this typographic revolution, which allows me to impress on words (already free, dynamic, and torpedolike) every velocity of the stars, the clouds, airplanes, trains, waves, explosives, globules of seacoal, molecules, and atoms.”

There was no turning back. Once unleashed, the creative fury of avant-garde experimentation raged swiftly across Europe, tearing conventional understandings of poetry apart in explosion after explosion of radical innovation. By the time Marinetti visited Saint Petersburg in January 1914, he was greeted with jeers from “Cubo-Futurist” poets, who insisted Russia’s experiments with zaum, or “beyondsense” language, had evolved in its popular and its academic edition. The grandiose slaughters and cannibalistic exploits? Our spontaneous foolishness and enthusiasm for illusion will destroy them.”

Experiments with visual and sound poetry continued to evolve in the 1920s and 30s, unfolding in a landscape far too vast to explore here. As Mayakovsky, Kruchenykh, and others channeled the explosive wave of Russian Futurism into the early Soviet avant-garde, forging alliances with Constructivist artists and designers like El Lissitzky, zvoun also traveled west with the Georgian poet and master print-maker Iliazd, who joined in the creative fervent of Dada and Surrealism in Paris after fleeing Tbilisi in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution. Ripples, crosscurrents, and swirling convergences fed a torrent of new experimental poetry, filling the pages of avant-garde journals with masterpieces of high modernist innovation, many of which later found a place in Iliazd’s epoch-making 1949 compendium, Poétes de mots inconnus – in all twenty-two visual and sound poets, including of course Iliazd himself. Set out with typographic genius on page after exquisitely crafted page, the work is a masterpiece in its own right, an irrefutable testament to the creative achievements of what is now called the “historical avant-garde.”

But it was only another beginning. Before moving on to the radical departures of the postwar avant-garde, it is well worth pausing to dwell over one last landmark of the modernist era: the Ursonate of Kurt Schwitters. As Mallarmé’s Coup de dés towers at the dawn of modern visual poetry; the Ursonate has assumed nearly mythical status in origin stories of contemporary sound poetry. Emerging from over a decade of experiment, recital, and refinement, the poem lives and breathes the spirit of creative intermingling of the 1920s, drawing as deeply on its crosscurrents as any work of the age. The “poet’s poem” of Raoul Hausmann, a central figure in Berlin Dada, gave Schwitters the initial nudge, but Russian Futurism and zvoun also played a hand, as did the artist’s close collaboration with the Constructivist El Lissitzky in the crucial years of the poem’s composition. And it is surely no accident that Schwitters sent a personally inscribed copy to the founder of Italian Futurism, F.T. Marinetti. Composed almost entirely of pure vocal acoustics, or “primal sounds,” the Ursonate relies on typogra-
LETTRIST DETONATIONS
LETTRIST DETONATIONS

To vanquish, Lettrism must be PURIFICATION, VENGEANCE, TERROR.
Soon the first fires will engulf the bordels of Paris to make more room for Lettrism.
I promise you this!

MY LIFE must be a great ACTION.
Gabriel Pomerand, 1946

Excerpt from idios lou, “Crie pour 5000.00 julis egoéls,” 1947.

LETTRISM, the first avant-garde movement of the postwar era, ar- rived in Paris in the suitcases of a young Romanian exile, Isidore Isou, who had picked his way across war-torn Europe to throw a bomb in the lap of the literary establishment in 1945. “It is not a matter of destroying words for more words, nor of forging notions to clarify their nuances, nor of moving terms to make them hold more meanings,” Isou insisted, but of “unfolding before dazzled spectators marvels realized in letters (debris of destruc- tions).” Conceived in the darkest hours of the Nazi conquest of Europe, Lettrism spoke the language of war, occupation, trauma, holocaust. “The Word … Assassinates sensibilities. Indifferently uniform in tormenting inspiration, Twists tensions,” one reads in the first manifesto of Lettrism, dated 1942: “The word is the first stereotype.” Once in Paris, Isou set out to “vanquish the City,” joining forces with the young vagabond poet Gabriel Pomerand and to put Lettrism on stage in the jazz cellars of Saint-Ger- main-des-Prés, while at the same time lobbying Jean Paulhan, the influential editor of the Nouvelle Revue française, to publish the first issue of Lettrist poems in 1947. Three years later, Maurice Leiris followed, publishing early compilations in his new review L’u as did Jean-Louis Brau, Serge Bena, Gil Wolman, and other rebellious youth, who quickly found a voice all their own.”Isou was an end. In the beginning was Wolman,” the latter wrote in the first issue of L’u: poking fun at the exaggerated claims of Lettrism’s founder. Experimenting with microphones in live performance, Wol- man had in fact pushed fur- thermore, tearing letters apart to reveal qualities of the voice and sounds of the human body concealed inside. “From every- letter there emanates a mass of vibrations that remain inaccessible.” Detached from consonants and given structure as an independent of vowels, breath was the medi- um of Wolman’s mégapneumie, a new form of wringing guttural sound poetry that seemed to point beyond Lettrism from the start. “Iiou did not destroy the word for the let- ter but the concept, which naturally led him to take back the letter and create words,”
Wolman mused, working out the implications of his own discovery in an early fragment. “Mégapneumie takes possession of the initial result, as Wolman enthused: “Any form at all can become a letter, an enormous universe of writing, in which things mutate into personal signs, unveils itself to the lovers of construction.” Still, sound continued to play a role in early Lettrist experiments with the visual and tactile properties of “letter/objects.” Coinciding with attempts to invent a system of notation for sound poetry, Lettrist painting and sculpture seemed in many ways to grow out of them, extending their reach to include rebuses, “hieroglyphs,” and other visual elements that served as phonetic signs.

The initial result, as Wolman rightly noted, was a return to the word” very much at odds with the original explosive force of Lettrist detonations. Eye-catching works such as Dufrêne abandoned writing (and Lettrism) altogether. The force of Lettrist detonations. True to its combative origins, Lettrism sparked rife contention and battles that quickly fractured the movement into rival factions in the early 1950s. While Dufrêne left with others to launch Le Soulèvement de la Jeunesse, or “Uprising of Youth,” Wolman, Bena, and Brau formed a separate group with Guy Debord, founding the Lettrist International in 1952. Debord, who in turn went on to lead the Situationalists in a radical assault on postwar society and culture, had joined Isou’s movement only a year earlier, but the impact of his brief encounter with Lettrism was decisive. A barrier to many at the time and later, the very stridency of Isou’s anti-establishment claims, his attacks on the historic “betrayals” of Dada and Surrealism, his insistence on the explosive potential of Lettrism as a revolutionary force made a strong impression on Debord. “After an intense five-hour discussion in a bar in the Quarter, I had to admit Isou is a poet,” the young poet and self-described “terrorist” informed Marc O., a central figure in Lettrist cinema, upon arriving in Paris in 1951. It would not be long before he was accusing Isou of having betrayed the cause. But first Debord learned much from Lettrist technique, particularly the bouleversement (“over-turning,” “perturbation”) of found images, scavenged from mass culture and juxtaposed with the subversive messages of a “discrepant” sound track, employed to scandalizing effect in his first experimental film, Screams for Sade. Disagreements over Lettrist cinema—Isou derided the film as “poorly made”—helped precipitate the break not long after the premier; a moment that continued to occupy Debord for years and appears among the “load-bearing structures” of Mémoires, a masterpiece in the art of détournerment composed with the Danish painter and fellow Situationist Asger Jorn in 1959. Separating “extremists from those who no longer stand close to the edge,” the Lettrist International became a platform for the elaboration of key concepts and strategies of the Situationist critique—and also for fighting Isou on his own turf. “Nothing can be done momentarily, if not the revolutionary utility of provocation,” Debord exclaimed in an invitation to the Lettrist International’s own exhibition of métagraphies at the Galerie du Passage in 1954: “What’s in play is the seizure of power.”
Galleries in fact became another battleground, as Lettrism and its controversies spilled over into the world of art. Based out of the Galerie Primes, where Lemaître launched the groupe lettriste et hypergraphique in 1955, Robert Estivals played an important part, steering early convergences between the struggles of experimental poetry and avant-garde art into yet another rival faction, the Ultra-Lettrists. Estivals initially promoted the turn to purely visual explorations of the sign, devoid of linguistic signification, and helped Lemaître organize the exhibition of hypographs, which also featured work by Isou and Pomerand. But by 1958 he had enough. Denouncing Isou’s “egomaniacal” tendencies, Estivals turned to the prodigal Lettrist François Dufrêne, who had long since left the movement to pursue his cri-rythmes, and a complete “outsider,” Jacques Villeglé, to announce the formation of Ultra-Lettrism in the second issue of his review Grâmmes. The label itself was suggested by décollage artist Raymond Hains, whose work with shredded letters had been inspired by early Lettrist performance. Along with Dufrêne and Villeglé, Hains took to the streets of Paris in the early 1950s, seizing on the spontaneous jumble of texts, colors, and forms that surfaced in torn layers of advertising posters as a new visual art. “The gestural savagery of a multitude is individualized to become the most remarkable manifestation of ‘art made by all and not by one,’” Villeglé exclaimed. Emerging not from individual acts of creative genius, but from modern mass culture and society at large, the lacerated posters of the affichistes posed a direct challenge to Isou’s cult of originality, or so it seemed to Estivals, who blamed the Lettrist leader for having stunted the movement’s growth with his overblown style and childish need for fawning acolytes. Ultra-Lettrism would revive that potential by channeling it in a truly revolutionary – and collectivist – direction. The alliance did not last long. Villeglé and Dufrêne soon left to join Hains, who had refused to join the movement and accused Estivals of having usurped the term ‘Ultra-Lettrism.’ Taking the name with them, the trio exhibited their work in a collective show at the first Paris Biennale in 1959 before going on to make art history alongside Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri, and other avant-garde artists as signatories of Pierre Restany’s founding manifesto of Nouveau Réalisme in 1960. Left behind with Grâmmes, Estivals launched an increasingly acerbic assault on the egoistical caprice of both the Ultra-Lettrists and the Situationists. Only “socialist art” could express the collectivist, anti-individualist spirit of the postwar era, Estivals insisted, and he devoted the final issues of Grâmmes to promoting another new movement, “Signism,” as the ultimate inheritor of Lettrism’s radical promise.

After nearly a decade of schisms and conflict, however, Lettrism itself was still very much alive. Staging a series of exhibitions and recitals, circulating original artwork in luxury portfolios and a second, limited-edition run of Ur, Isou and Lemaître reasserted the position of the mainstream movement just as battles over experimental poetry and the avant-garde were entering a crucial new phase, not only in Paris but across Europe, in the early 1960s. Much of this renewed energy came with the recruitment of a new generation of Lettrist poets and artists – Jacques Spacagna, Roberto Altman, Roland Sabatier, Alain Satier, and others. But it undoubtedly also owed much to the unexpected return of two renegades, Brau and Wolman, who rejoined Isou and Lemaître at the beginning of the decade, attending regular meetings of the Lettrist leadership and taking part in group shows and concerts. Dufrêne also played a role, refused to join the movement and accused Estivals of having usurped the term ‘Ultra-Lettrism.’ Taking the name with them, the trio exhibited their work in a collective show at the first Paris Biennale in 1959 before going on to make art history alongside Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri, and other avant-garde artists as signatories of Pierre Restany’s founding manifesto of Nouveau Réalisme in 1960. Left behind with Grâmmes, Estivals launched an increasingly acerbic assault on the egoistical caprice of both the Ultra-Lettrists and the Situationists. Only “socialist art” could express the collectivist, anti-individualist spirit of the postwar era, Estivals insisted, and he devoted the final issues of Grâmmes to promoting another new movement, “Signism,” as the ultimate inheritor of Lettrism’s radical promise.

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and again in subsequent pages. While concrete poetry marked its tenth anniversary amid mounting political criticism and a radical regrouping of younger poets across Europe, while **poesia visiva** came to life with the founding of Italy’s **Gruppo Settanta**, while Henri Chopin and Paul de Vree forged their alliance to put sound poetry on the map in Belgium and France, Isou and Lemaître pushed the revived Lettrist movement front and center in battles over **Nouveau Réalisme**, informal art, and the place of poetry in the Parisian art world. Perhaps at the height of his influence, Isou worked with gallerist Valerie Schmidt to host a landmark 1963 exhibition, *The Letter and the Sign in Contemporary Painting*, which pointedly situated the Lettrists vis-à-vis an initiating the tense reconciliation by bringing the rival factions back together for a show on experimental art he organized at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris in 1960. The following year, while Estival’s Signism exhibition went nowhere, Isou, Lemaître, Brau, and Wolman celebrated the fifteen anniversary of Lettrism – now dubbed “The School of the Sign 1946” – with a collective show of paintings at the Galerie Weill and a recital of Lettrist poetry at the Museum of Modern Art in which Wolman performed his méga-pneumes for the first time since the rowdy happenings at the Tabou more than a decade earlier. The renewed encounter with Lettrism was particularly important for Wolman, who had abandoned sound poetry and turned to the visual arts. Expelled by Debord just months before the founding of the Situationist International in 1957, Wolman focused on painting, at first in an “informal” style influenced by Jorn and the Cobra group. But after returning to the Lettrist fold, he again began experimenting with the visual aspects of language, integrating obscured graffiti-like writing and fumetti into his paintings before inventing the practice of “Scotch Art,” which involved the transfer of found texts from mass media onto canvas or wood using adhesive tape. A brilliant blend of métagraphie and détournement with obvious affinities to the lacerated posters of the Ultra-Lettrist affichistes, the result was no doubt the high point of Wolman’s artistic career and some of the most striking materially-based visual poetry produced in postwar Europe.

The year 1963 was a pivotal moment for experimental poetry and the postwar avant-garde, one to which we will return again...
The practices of bouleversement. Inflected through strife, concealed beneath conflict, the Lettrists’ impact on art and poetry of the postwar era remains poorly understood. It is time at last to bring Lettrism itself back into the fold.

••• LETTRIST DETONATIONS

The charge – thanks, in part at least, to the detonations Isou and his followers unleashed on Paris in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Once a sign of vitality, internal strife and contention gradually consumed Lettrism, its battles winding down into obscure family squabbles that increasingly isolated the movement from the broader world, while the acrimony generated by strident anti-establishment polemics only served to obscure its legacy still further, as wounded cultural institutions chose to exclude its fiery archives from the historical record. But it would be a mistake to ignore Lettrism. For all the overblown claims, infighting, missteps, and scandals, the first avant-garde movement of the postwar era shaped the landscapes of experimental poetry in fundamental ways. The recitals at the Tabou may not have been the first to go beyond words to letters – even Isou acknowledged the historic precedence of Schwitters’s Ursonate – but they marked a significant departure all the same. Without them, the crucial early experiments with microphones and sound recording that produced Wolman’s mégapneumes and the cry-rhythms of Dufrêne would have been unthinkable, yet both continued to inform the work of postwar sound poets long after they had left Lettrism behind for good. The same is true for developments in visual poetry. Hains’s experiments with lacerated posters, soon a staple of Nouveau Réalisme, grew out of early exposure to Lettrism, but Isou’s métrographie and Lemaître’s hypergraphie also played a role in avant-garde experimentation with the visual aspects of language. Détournement, a key strategy for visual poets and artists for decades to come, owed much to its origins in Lettrist

impressive array of avant-garde artists, including (to name but a few) Cobra painter Pierre Alechinsky; Armand and his fellow nouveau réalistes Dufrêne, Hains, and Villeglé; Fluxus artists Robert Filliou and Jean-Jacques Lebel; Antonio Tàpies; Jasper Johns; and Cy Twombly. In conjunction with the exhibition, Brau and Wolman launched a new review, A, the first Lettrist journal to feature original artwork, while Lemaître began publishing the new luxury edition of Ur also in 1963. The results seemed encouraging. Curated by prominent art critic Michel Tapié, a major group exhibition at the Galerie Stadler featured the Lettrists the following year; joined once again by Dufrêne, who showed his dessous d’affiches (versos of lacerated posters), and 1964 also saw the publication of special issues entirely devoted to covering the movement in Bizarre and La Revue musicale.

But the writing was on the wall. Breaking away from Isou and Lemaître, Brau and Wolman had already launched the short-lived Second Lettrist International at the end of 1963, and a Lettrist recital at the Odeon Theater the following February ended with a decisive rupture, as Wolman refused to join the group in the traditional “Lettrist choruses” after giving a final public performance of his mégapneumes. “Isidore’s theories were revolutionary fifteen years ago. Today they are totally outmoded … appallingly old-fashioned,” Wolman told the assembled press afterwards: “the new spirit must be imposed.”

The words were harsh, but not entirely unwarranted. Times had changed. While some Lettrists sought to tap into the revolutionary currents swelling toward the uprisings of May 1968, a new generation of experimental poets was already leading the way: thanks, in part at least, to the detonations Isou and his followers unleashed on Paris in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Once a sign of vitality, internal strife and contention gradually consumed Lettrism, its battles winding down into obscure family squabbles that increasingly isolated the movement from the broader world, while the acrimony generated by strident anti-establishment polemics only served to obscure its legacy still further, as wounded cultural institutions chose to exclude its fiery archives from the historical record. But it would be a mistake to ignore Lettrism. For all the overblown claims, infighting, missteps, and scandals, the first avant-garde movement of the postwar era shaped the landscapes of experimental poetry in fundamental ways. The recitals at the Tabou may not have been the first to go beyond words to letters – even Isou acknowledged the historic precedence of Schwitters’s Ursonate – but they marked a significant departure all the same. Without them, the crucial early experiments with microphones and sound recording that produced Wolman’s mégapneumes and the cry-rhythms of Dufrêne would have been unthinkable, yet both continued to inform the work of postwar sound poets long after they had left Lettrism behind for good. The same is true for developments in visual poetry. Hains’s experiments with lacerated posters, soon a staple of Nouveau Réalisme, grew out of early exposure to Lettrism, but Isou’s métrographie and Lemaître’s hypergraphie also played a role in avant-garde experimentation with the visual aspects of language. Détournement, a key strategy for visual poets and artists for decades to come, owed much to its origins in Lettrist cinema and the practices of bouleversement. Inflected through strife, concealed beneath conflict, the Lettrists’ impact on art and poetry of the postwar era remains poorly understood. It is time at last to bring Lettrism itself back into the fold.
FLESH, BLOOD, AND WAVES
Sound poetry traces its origins far back in time, well before its classic iteration in the modernist Unsonate of Kurt Schwitters. In principle erato. But it emerged transformed by the experience of the Second World War. This was certainly true of Lettrism, and of Itsu in particular, with his long list of atrocities committed by the Word – “the first stereotype” – drawn up under the shadow of holocaust in Rumania in 1942. But it was also true of sound poets outside the Lettrist fold like Altagog, who conceived métopoésie as an antidote to “utilitarian language” while seeking shelter from war and ruin on the banks of the Mosel in 1943. “Do you believe these sensations, which emanate directly from the living, are without value? Nothing is more profound than this direct language of interior dynamism, organized according to the laws of phonetics with an eye to the maximum expression.” The trauma of war, fascism, holocaust resonates deeply in the poetry of Henri Chopin. Deported to Lithuania. Repatriated from a Russian port at Murmansk in June 1945, the poet returned to Paris to learn both his brothers had been killed in the resistance and that he himself had been pre- sumed dead. With the beginning of the Cold War, Chopin again was recorded and transmitting mélodies over the airwaves. In principio erat. Ursonate, the earliest and most striking examples of typewriter poetry, which he lobbied Paulhan (unsuccess- fully) to publish as a counterpoint to Isou’s Introduction to a New Poetry and a New Music with Gallimard in the 1950s. Altagog also joined forces with Estivals, whom he met along with Dufrêne during Lemaître’s hypergraphie show at the Gal- erie Primes, organizing a public confrontation with Isou in 1958, the year of Ultra-Lettrism, while Estivals featured his work in Grimes and the first exhibition of Signism three years later. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Altagog continued to experiment and refine, devising elaborate systems of notation in complex scores that might easily qualify as some of the earliest and most striking examples of typewriter poetry, recording the behavior of sound frequencies on color-coded diagrams, inventing musical instruments such as the pantophone, designed to interact precisely with timbres of wordless voices in his mélodies. Recognition has been slow in coming, but how can this be compared to an audio poem, which is the polyphonic use of body noise? Where there was once a world of art like the Unsonate, today there is the enunciation of a body that transforms the human body into harmony. Where once literacy was in full force, there is now the unnamed transmission of physical sounds … Where once there was the end of a language and of words, today there is the commencement of physical particles that announce themselves through the use of waves.

Henri Chopin, 1967

FLESH, BLOOD, AND WAVES

Chopin’s encounter with Altagog was significant. Channeling the trauma of war into métopoésie, compositions of “pure vocal / auditive sensations,” the provincial sound poet from a tiny village near Lorraine expressed a potent critique of language and culture seasoned by another element that would be decisive for Chopin: belief in the transformative potential of technology, as long as it was made to serve humanity and not the other way around. Societies “half poisoned by an illusory culture, refractory to their own liberation,” could only “hope that science itself and its technologies will allow them to leave the age of the symbol and the stubborn stage of utilitarian life behind for productions of a freely sovereign art, for a universal music of sound, dynamic or plastic.” The technologies in question were microphones, sound studios, radio, and direct voice recording on magnetic tape – “caliber of the most secret waves,” as Chopin later enthused – all eagerly employed by Altagog, who began preserving “permanent electronic auditions” as early as 1946. By the time Chopin met him, Altagog had been recording and transmitting mélodies over the airwaves at Radio Lorraine for years, work he continued after settling in Paris, where he collaborated with the sound engineer, broad- caster, composer, and pioneer of experimental electronic mu- sic Pierre Schaeffer on various projects, including the 1956 de- but of his Symphonie métopoétique on Radiodiffusion Française. While he resisted the technological breakthroughs in post- production manipulation central to the work of Schaeffer and Chopin, Altagog shared their fascination with the interplay of superimposed sounds, composing complex scores for multiple voices and instrumental accompaniment and carefully charting the interaction of frequencies in recordings of live performance. The technical expertise gained from studio production certainly benefited Chopin, whose early sound poems were broadcast on radio by Altagog’s wife, Maguy Lovano. Working with Lovano in 1961, Chopin hosted his first radio series, a program on mu- sic and literature, abruptly cut short when the poet arranged for Kafka’s Penal Colony to be read on the air in a feature dedi- cated to “Tyrants and Dictators.” But from there he went on to broadcast a long series of sound performances as a producer for Radio Lusanne in the 1960s. All but forgotten today, Altagog played a vital part in the battles over experimental poetry in Paris. Giving scores of live performances, broadcasting on radio, publishing tracts, partner- ing with record clubs to distribute his work on vinyl, he vigor- ously contested Lettrist claims to precedence and primacy in open debates and a lengthy theoretical treatise, Arguments for an Absolute Discourse, which he lobbed Paulhan (unsuccess- fully) to publish as a counterpart to Isou’s Introduction to a New Poetry and a New Music with Gallimard in the 1950s. Altagog also joined forces with Estivals, whom he met along with Dufrêne during Lemaître’s hypergraphie show at the Gal- erie Primes, organizing a public confrontation with Isou in 1958, the year of Ultra-Lettrism, while Estivals featured his work in Grimes and the first exhibition of Signism three years later. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Altagog continued to experiment and refine, devising elaborate systems of notation in complex scores that might easily qualify as some of the earliest and most striking examples of typewriter poetry, recording the behavior of sound frequencies on color-coded diagrams, inventing musical instruments such as the pantophone, designed to interact precisely with timbres of wordless voices in his mélodies. Recognition has been slow in coming, to produce the interactions, the sounds.

Altagor, typescript score of a métopoésie (February, 1951).
Aside from a brief moment of notoriety in the 1970s – Cramps Records included his work in its anthology of sound poetry – Altagor has lapsed into obscurity. Yet his compositions remained “the most significant of phonetic poetry” for Dufrêne, certainly one of the leading figures in postwar sound poetry, while Chopin acknowledged both the precedence and the importance of Altagor’s contributions on more than one occasion. “This is probably the only phonetic poet who mounted an invented language of imaginary syllables and phonemes, which he knew to record, served up by a voice in unheard-of timbres.”

Sound poetry was a revelation for Chopin, an apocalypse in every sense, and so it remains for those who confront his works today. Shocking, bewildering, alienating, surprising, filled with uncanny rhythms and distortions tugging and jostling among the ghosts of words, awkward noises of the body that startle, embarrass, and yes, at times make us laugh. A rude awakening, perhaps, but necessary and liberating, at least for Chopin, who believed it announced the dawn of an entirely new epoch, strange and frightening to those still living in the shattered past, but no less so than the present would seem to inhabitants of the distant future: “an ancient land, of old customs, worn-out words, myths that feed the comic strips.” With the collapse of tradition, poets were free to discover a language unconstrained by “convention, literacy, grammar, rules, obedience,” a language grounded in the reality of living human bodies, and technology would show the way. “Magnetic tape … carries enunciative means of the voice and sounds we could not hope to discover by other means, as long as we remained on the surface of sound and of the body.” Just as important, sound recording completely eliminated the need for letters, signs, and symbols “our new alphabet is called electricity, and everything it absorbs and emits.” Free from the “grafted skeleton” of written language, poetry could ebb and flow without restraint, born by the dynamic rhythms of the new analog media. “The art of our times is found in movement, in light, in sound, in short, in everything that comes to life from the waves gathered by motors, by apparatus for capturing waves like microphones, like television, which must gather the images made for it, of course, but also by it, like the disk, for which we have found an art of sound that did not exist before 1955.”

Born at the crossroads of technology and the human body – flesh, blood, and waves – Chopin’s poetry drove postwar experimentation to radical extremes, quickly surpassing the early work of Altagor and even Dufrêne and Wolman, whose mégapneumie he viewed as a historical “turning point” in the poetic discovery of corporeal sound beyond words and letters. Chopin purchased his first microphone in 1955, well after others had begun exploring the possibilities it revealed, but he seemed determined to make up for lost time from the start. Composing sound poems as early as 1956, Chopin initially confined his experiments to words, often repeated to the point of abstraction, yet clearly echoing the trauma of his wartime experiences in marching cadences: “I work, I work, I work … I make them work.” Refusing to linger on “the surface” of language and the body, however, the poet avidly followed the advances in microphone technology, acquiring miniaturized devices that could be inserted into the throat, lungs, nasal passages, and even the stomach to recover an endless stream of unknown “voices” from the depths of the human body. “Inside you have an echo with the liquid way in the mouth, with breathing, with a strong sound from the tongue, you have respiration with the body,” Chopin explained. “Altogether it’s like a factory for sound. It was a great surprise for me. The body is like a factory that never stops. The body ignores silence.” Once captured on magnetic tape, human sounds – whether articulated or recovered from deep within – became raw material for a series of manipulations and “montage” on several tracts, as Chopin introduced echoes, reverberations, changes in speed and intensity, before cutting and splicing the pieces back together for replay on reel-to-reel machines. Even so, the composition was not finished, in some senses it never was, since Chopin’s poems relied on live performance for the ultimate effect. Taking charge of playback on stage, the poet ceaselessly improvised, speeding up, slowing down, stopping, reversing the tape, all the while employing his body as an instrument, using gestures and facial expressions to direct adjustments of sound and lighting levels by a team of attending technicians. An interactive “total spectacle.”

Chopin, notes on musical instruments (n.d.).

Henri Chopin with his tape recorder.
Chopin’s performances finally relied on the audience, which became part of the “ensemble of a real stage to see and feel, utilizing the view of the spectator but here too with domination of the author (the authors, I should say), utilizing the affective powers of the spectator/listener.”

As he developed and refined his techniques in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Chopin assumed a central role in shaping the emergent convergence of experimental poetry and avant-garde art, in which Lettrism and its various offshoots were also deeply involved. Taking over as chief editor after just three issues, Chopin quickly transformed Cinquième Saison into a leading review in the field, “a place for encounters without concern for races or boundaries,” which brought together poets, musicians, painters, and sculptors to develop new cross-disciplinary forms of expression grounded in the concrete, physical aspects of artistic media. “But after discovering the disk, it is necessary to promote a creation for this round, inert surface, susceptible to words and sounds,” Chopin wrote, announcing his plan to issue sound recordings with each number of Cinquième Saison in 1961. “It is necessary to take into account its phonetic powers, and also the ‘place’ it represents. What is indispensable, then, in a piece written for the disk, is to discover and know how to supplement the text properly speaking with an entire value suggestive of place, which the word will provoke in naming itself, and not drift off into space.” More than a publication, Cinquième Saison and its successor, OU, became a “place” themselves, a dynamic forum for elaborating such possibilities in dialogue with others, while the disks, usually issued in runs between 500 and 1000, gradually collected the results to form a mobile library of cutting-edge sound poetry, including Wolman’s mégapeupres, the en-rhythmes of Dufrenne, “lettres” by Jacques Spacagna, the multi-layered Scores of Bernard Heidsieck, and more, alongside some of Chopin’s most important compositions of the 1960s. Visual poets also found ample space here – Ilse and Pierre Garnier, Julien Blaine, Jean-François Bory, Paul de Vree, to name a few – as did painters such as Paul Armand Gette and Gianni Bertini, both of whom designed covers for the review. Even kinetic sculpture came into play. “These materials, which I could think of a priori as abstract, are concrete,” Chopin wrote, laying out his common ground with the sculptor Willy Anthoons in the same issue of Cinquième Saison that announced the forthcoming plan for disks. “They are composed with air, wind, breath, shadows, light, games: glitter, or masses, or volumes of force; steps, marches, dances, movements, and sometimes fixities; harmonies, a sort of crystallization of forms that will be present. The ensemble, and each expression, are concrete, as much so as the air that is indispensable for my respiration.”

Publisher, editor, facilitator, and practitioner of the new art of experimental poetry, Chopin also made sure it found a place in the galleries, staking his claim alongside Lettrists, Ultra-Lettrists, and others in the turf battles of the early 1960s. Shortly after taking control of Cinquième Saison, he began organizing the first in a series of exhibitions, alternately titled “Objective Poetry” and “Poem / Objects.” Co-curated with the poet and performance artist Jean-Jacques Lévêque and the art critic Gérard Guillot, the exhibition opened at the Parisian gallery Art de France in late 1961, followed almost immediately by a second show at the Galerie de la Jeune Parque in Lyon, Lévêque’s home base, in January 1962, before making the rounds in a tour across Europe over the next several years. Locked away in boudoirs for contemplation in hours of leisure, Chopin declared in his preface to the catalog, poetry could not hope to survive, it had to engage with the bustle and noise of contemporary society like other living arts.

\*\*\* FLESH, BLOOD, AND WAVES \*\*\*
"From now on there are but two ways open for poetry, this one, and the stage … the one plastic, for discovery of lands and skies in full movement, the other phonetic, for the amplitude of human expression. Poetry doesn’t talk any more, it does."

Situating the work of Chopin and Lévêque in relation to avant-garde painting and sculpture, the exhibition marked an important moment in the evolution of Chopin’s conception of sound poetry as performative action, and it also set the stage for future collaboration with many of the artists featured, including Gette and above all Bertini, who soon became one of the poet’s closest friends and allies. A protégé of Restany, the founder of Nouveau Réalisme, Bertini had been working with Lévêque and another experimental poet, Jean-Clarence Lambert, designing artist books and sets for provocative action pieces as he developed his own distinctive style in the late 1950s. Dubbed “Bertinization” by Restany, the underlying technique involved manipulation of clichéd images from mass media, reduced and “concentrated” by the successive use of photographic screen printing and stencils to produce a kind of European pop art, contemporary with Warhol, but inflected through a mocking critique of postwar consumer culture. Bertini’s art and Chopin’s poetry seemed almost inseparable after the exhibition, as the two collaborated on numerous schemes and projects, including an “Action Poetry” program at the Paris Biennale, where Chopin’s intensely experimental film Energy of Sleep debuted in 1965. Chopin was determined to put experimental poetry on the map. Appalled by the lack of public awareness, even of the historical avant-garde, he worked with Louvain and the Belgian painter Michel Seuphor to compile a set of “synoptic tables” that charted “the birth of the new art” in two categories: “the liquidation of temporal languages” and “the constructors of spaces.” First published in Cinquième Saison on the heels of the “Objective Poetry” exhibition, the tables were intended to provide a roadmap for research that would ultimately legitimize the postwar avant-garde by placing its experimental work in the context of historical developments that stretched back far into the nineteenth century, terrain that would be comfortably familiar, Chopin hoped, even to the most staid, conventional readers. Divided into destructive and constructive phases, the schema bore some similarity to Issou’s view of the avant-garde — in fact Lemaître lent a hand in devising it, as did Altagor — but without his polemical disregard for previous movements. On the contrary, it was time for a new edition of Iliazd’s Poetry of Unknown Words, Chopin noted in presenting the tables. The historical avant-garde received lavish attention in subsequent issues, particularly Dada, and Chopin reached out to the aging veteran Raoul Hausmann, who became an important ally and remained so until his death in 1971. Chopin’s efforts to link experimental poetry with the broader landscape of avant-garde art were soon joined by the Flemish poet Paul de Vree. Immediately grasping the significance of the synoptic tables, de Vree responded with enthusiasm, providing feedback and suggestions before publishing his own map of the postwar confluence of art and poetry, which he labeled “Integration.” Like Chopin, de Vree plotted the progression of historical movements over time, from left to right across a horizontal axis, but he also situated them within overlapping force fields defined by a series of vertical polarities — “social” and “technical environments,” “masses”...
and “machines,” “hot” and “cold” – suffused by the tension between “subjectivism” and “objectivism,” which traverses both axes. Tracing movements from Cubism to Pop Art and Nouveau Réalisme, the diagram is an astonishing feat of conceptual mapping, and it captures much that was at stake in the battles of the postwar avant-garde.

The encounter with Chopin seemed to change everything for de Vree. Founding De Tafelronde in 1953, the Belgian poet had directed what remained a fairly traditional review of Flemish art and literature, showing little interest in international developments or even in straying beyond the journal’s tightly drawn linguistic frontiers. Until 1963. Within months of their exchange over the synoptic tables, de Vree opened the pages of De Tafelronde not only to Chopin, but to Heidsieck, Pierre Carriere, an entire generation of young French experimental poets, in fact, announcing the change in bold typography right on the cover: “New Tendencies: Phonetic Phonetic Audio-Visual Open Poetry.” The metamorphosis was striking. Adapting the format to ever more adventurous forms of visual composition, de Vree left conventional text-based layouts behind, using colored paper, transparencies, photoduplication, and typography to present a kaleidoscope of postwar experimental poetry, intermingled with “homages” to the historical avant-garde. De Tafelronde devoted special issues to Hausmann, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, and Pierre Albert-Birot, often accompanied by Chopin’s reflections on their importance for contemporary visual and sound poetry. Indeed, Chopin published some of his most eloquent theoretical work in De Tafelronde, while de Vree reciprocated with articles on “avant-garde poetry-painting” in Cinquème Saison. In striking pieces such as this disk-shaped manifesto on the wave-based era of sound poetry, the Belgian poet certainly followed Chopin’s lead, but as he grew more familiar with the terrain he gradually assumed an independent role. Moderating disputes that emerged between Chopin and Dufrêne in the mid-1960s, de Vree made sure both sound poets had the chance to air their views (and grievances) in De Tafelronde, which became a true “round table” for experimental poets representing a wide range of movements, from German concrete poetry – Timm Ulrichs published an important manifesto on changing conceptions of the “concrete” here – to Italian Poesia Visiva, and many more besides. All of these currents left a powerful mark on de Vree’s own work, which continued to evolve in De Tafelronde and volumes of typewriter poetry and multi-media collage such as Explosieven (1966) and Zimpromaties (1967). When he finally took De Tafelronde into alliance with the Italian poet Saraceno in Lotta Poesia, Chopin came along for the ride. But it was now de Vree who was driving the ship. For those looking for an introduction to the vast range of European experimental poetry in the 1960s and 1970s, there is no better place to start than De Tafelronde.

Meanwhile, Chopin was busy building networks of his own. “Staging” the imaginary Festival of Fort Boyard in 1967, he assembled an impressive array of visual and sound poets, painters, sculptors, composers, and film-makers for a brilliant piece of conceptual art that is no doubt one of the highlights of the current exhibition. Affichistes Dufrêne, Hains, and Minimo Rotella;
Beat poet Brion Gysin; British and French visual poets Dom Sylvester Houédard, John Furnival, Gil Wolman, and Julien Blaine; experimental cineastes Serge Béguier (who filmed Chopin’s Energy of Sleep) and Kurt Kren; Greek composer Nikos Ignatiadis; even art critic Restany, founder of Nouveau Réalisme, all received top billing for “performances”—often outrageous and sometimes impossible—on a series of screen print posters, the festival’s only concrete manifestation, made by Bertini in collaboration with many of the artists. With the uprisings in Paris, Chopin briefly joined the protests the following year and even produced a poster of his own: “I + I + I + I” was the only answer to a world of “prisons, killings, crimes, murders, police, militias,” he declared, assailing the “historical ideological mask-ss” born by “all species of politicians,” who agreed on just one thing: “to destroy us all.” Fearing repercussions, Chopin moved to Essex in June 1968, where he remained in exile for nearly twenty years. Together with his wife Jean Radcliffe, the poet made their large Victorian estate Ingatestone into a studio, production center, and meeting place for the avant-garde. RelaunchingOU, he also published a series of artist books, including works by Hausmann and Heidsieck and The Electronic Revolution by American Beat writer William S. Burroughs. Burroughs, who perfected the “cut-up” technique along with Gysin in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was a frequent guest at Ingatestone, arriving each time with two bottles of scotch, which he remained long enough to finish, and on one occasion with several grand pianos that were subsequently chopped to bits and buried on the grounds. Bringing all the threads together at Ingatestone, Chopin composed his masterful survey of the movement, International Sound Poetry, here as well. Published in 1979, it was “a monument, a repertoire, a dictionary, a swarm of precious details, all if this is very useful” Heidsieck wrote Chopin upon receiving his copy, and so it remains today.

And then there was The Last Novel of the World. Beautiful, hilarious, gruesome, and ghastly all at once, Chopin’s tale of the mass murderer and dictator ERnest summons the complex impulses, motivations, and innovative talent that drove the poet’s career into a work that, appropriately, defies all attempts at classification. Interspersed with typewriter poems composed throughout the 1960s, the text itself breaks down into tumbling lines and rigid marching columns of sound poetry over and over again. And yet there is a narrative. Following ERnest’s path from hapless farm hand to President of the World, Chopin guides us through a trail of bodies that pile up, at first one by one, then by the tens, hundreds, even thousands, as the killer / protagonist perfects his invention of mass terror—the nonsensical “kneecap stump”—winning love and acclamation all along the way. Parading by cheering throngs through the Arc de Triomphe down the Champs Élysées, ERnest is at last proclaimed dictator of the universe by the masses, who loudly smack their lips (like Dufrêne, the author notes) in uproarious applause. Composed in 1963, the text obviously echoes Chopin’s traumatic wartime experience, just as his earliest sound poems had done, and it concludes with the page after page of the same refrain: “I work, I work, I work …” But the story gained an entirely new set of resonances after the uprisings of 1968, as de Vree, de Charmoy, and others clearly recognized in their correspondence with Chopin. Accompanied by a disk recording of Night Fishing, one of his earliest sound poems, and screen prints of original artwork by Hausmann and Bertini, The Last Novel of the World finally appeared exquisitely set on handmade paper by the Belgian printer Jo Verbruggen, in 1970.
MIXING CONCRETE
Sweeping across oceans and continents, concrete poetry poured vital new energy, impulses, and movement into Europe just as avant-garde experiments with the physical, nonverbal qualities of language and its media were about to burgeon out in an intense and prolific phase of expansion toward the end of the 1950s. Swedish poet Oyvind Fahlstrom had published the first “Manifesto for Concrete Poetry” in 1953, but the international movement formed around two other centers, the Brazilian Noigandres group and the Swiss poet Eugen Gomringer. Founded in Sao Paulo by Augusto and Haroldo de Campos and Decio Pignatari, the Brazilian group took its name from an indecipherable word in Ezra Pound’s “Canto XX” — “Noigandres, eh, noigandres / Now what the DEFFIL can that mean!” Capturing the desire to explore nonverbal forms of poetic language that brought them together, the borrowed name also acknowledged the group’s debt to Pound, whose early experiments with “ideograms” supplied an important precedent, as well as others in the historical avant-garde: Futurists, Dadaists, Apollinaire, and above all Mallarmé, “the first qualitative jump: ‘subdivisions prismatiques de l’idée,’ space (‘blancs’) and typographic devices as substantive elements of composition.”

Gomringer also looked to *Un Coup de dés* for inspiration in composing his *Constellations*, first published in 1953, the same year that Augusto de Campos began experimenting with typography and color to produce his *Poetamenos*, and a year after the founding of Noigandres. Exploring typographic configurations of words and letters on the page as a means to convey poetic meaning through structure rather than syntax, Gomringer and the Brazilians formulated similar sets of principles, strategies, and techniques in the first half of the decade, each side working independently of the other until they at last converged in Germany at the Hochschule für Gestaltung, the “New Bauhaus,” where Pignatari met Gomringer together with Max Bill in 1955. The encounter was decisive. Bill, for whom Gomringer was now working in Ulm, had been promoting concrete art since the 1930s, not only in Europe, but also in Brazil, where his exhibition at the Sao Paulo Museum of Art helped inspire the country’s architects and artists in a massive turn towards concretism in 1951. With its austere insistence on function, on geometry, on deriving a universal, inherent language of expression from the material properties of media, Bill’s conception of concrete art provided an articulate platform around which poets on both sides could rally. “Concrete poetry is founded on the contemporary scientific/technical worldview and will come into its own in the synthetic/rationalistic world of tomorrow,” wrote Gomringer, prefacing an anthology he and Pignatari planned to publish in 1956, the year the movement was officially launched in Brazil. “Concrete poem is an object in and by itself, not an interpreter of exterior objects and/or more or less subjective feelings,” Pignatari and the de Campos brothers proclaimed in the “Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry,” published two years later: “Its material [is the] word (sound, visual form, semantical charge). Its problem: a problem of functions-relations of this material.”

By the early 1960s, concrete poetry was spreading across Europe like wildfire, transforming the landscapes of avant-garde experimentation as it blazed the trail for a new generation in centers from Lisbon to Vienna and beyond. Chopin’s rhapsodic vision of air, breath, light, shadow, and the body itself as “concrete” materials certainly bespoke the influence of the movement, and he even labeled some of his first typewriter compositions “concrete poems.” De Vree too applied the term alongside “Integration” in mapping out the postwar confluence of art and poetry early on. Using a typed matrix to transmute the line “concrete poetry anything” into “film audio poetry filmprova” from top to bottom across the cover of *De Tafelronde*, the Belgian poet employed one of the movement’s favorite techniques to capture brilliantly the complex ways concrete poetry had blended with a universal, inherent language of expression from the material properties of media, Bill’s conception of concrete art provided an articulate platform around which poets on both sides could rally. "Concrete poetry is founded on the contemporary scientific/technical worldview and will come into its own in the synthetic/rationalistic world of tomorrow," wrote Gomringer, prefacing an anthology he and Pignatari planned to publish in 1956, the year the movement was officially launched in Brazil. “Concrete poem is an object in and by itself, not an interpreter of exterior objects and/or more or less subjective feelings,” Pignatari and the de Campos brothers proclaimed in the “Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry,” published two years later: “Its material [is the] word (sound, visual form, semantical charge). Its problem: a problem of functions-relations of this material.”

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other avant-garde movements in the mid-1960s, only to be transmogrified by them in turn. Concrete poetry was changing. “Language is no longer a code for thinking, a code for communicating, it is a material we animate,” Pierre Garnier wrote, introducing Spatialism and Concrete Poetry in 1968. Having become “more and more bureaucratic, national languages had lost all power of incantation; it’s a matter of liberating the elements that are still alive in these languages (concrete, visual, objective poetry) and bringing them into the open by placing them in an active milieu,” Garnier’s rejection of “national languages,” his desire to rework the salvageable “material” they contained clearly echoed the initial impulses of concrete poetry. But there are other factors in play, a profound distrust of bureaucratic channels of communication and efficiency, the demand for active engagement, a call for the release of spontaneous human passion, that seem remote from the cool functional rationalism and intellectual rigor, the “total responsibility before language,” announced by the movement’s massive umbrella, creating confusion and unrest.

Expressing the frustrations of a young generation whose work had in large part been inspired by the arrival of concrete poetry, Bory immediately went on to acknowledge its transformative impact. “Clearly, the next artists will not write in a pre-concrete manner, just as it is impossible to write today as though surrealism never existed.” But experimental poetry had to move on. “I think we must trust them to create, and to continue to create important things,” the young poet asserted, speaking of his friends in the experimental avant-garde. “None of them consider their work finished, and none of them dream of being mummified.” Bory’s fear that concrete poetry had devolved into “an ignoble recuperative operation” reflected concerns not only about the movement’s vitality and coherence, but also about its ability to resist the comforting allures of a “history” that seemed increasingly suspect in the eyes of his generation. Gomringer’s belief that concrete poetry would “come into its own in the synthetic/rationalistic world of tomorrow” can hardly have been reassuring, any more than the Brazilians’ zeal for “faster communication” and the “poem-product: useful object.” Applying many of the same techniques, global networks of telecommunications and modern mass media had saturated postwar societies everywhere with a worldview neatly packaged in bundles of words, sounds, and images designed for immediate and unreflective consumption, the younger generation argued. How was concrete poetry any different? Claims that it dealt with “a communication of forms, of a structure-content, not with the usual message communication” sounded naïve by the mid-1960s. Pure aesthetic play, a bête noire for political-press informed artists since the days of the historical avant-garde, even worse. The Brazilian poets showed more concern for social issues than “the suave maquettistes of the Swiss school, fabricators of typographic objects and word-suitcases,” and they even led the way with assaults on the power of mass media and commercial advertising in poems such as Pignatari’s 1957 “beba cocoa cola” (“drink cocoa cola”), which transforms the global brand name into ‘cloaca’ (sewer), and Augusto de Campos’s 1964 “popcrete” collage “ôho par ôho,” a pyramid of eyes sliced from seductive photos in magazines and capped off with a set of directions — warning, no left turn, right turn only — provided by symbols on traffic signs. Obvious in cases like this, the subversive function of concrete poetry was less apparent elsewhere. Reduced to a purely formal exercise, experiments with the global tools of the trade could easily lead into a kind of harmless aesthetic complacency, stifling creativity by restraining it in a “typographic concrete corset,” or even unreflective complicity, a blind obedience to universal “laws” imposed by the media of a new worldwide communicative order. “Is concrete poetry idiotic?” Chopin asked readers in a typewriter-poem “referendum” on the subject, later published as part of the Last Novel of the World. Coming from the author, who observed that the mass-murdering dictator Efrén would have made a fine “concrete poet,” the outcome was hardly in doubt.

Chopin’s passionate distrust of the “totalitarian” potential lurking in language, a vital impulse behind postwar...
experiments with a poetry beyond words since the Lettrists and Altagor, was a crucial ingredient in the blend of avant-garde currents that infused the movement with new life and vigor in the 1960s. The “spirit of this poetry was not born from the desire to amuse myself with letters, nor from the need to employ graphic, mechanical, and collage methods to achieve aesthetic effects,” de Vree wrote, looking back on the radical transformations of his own work and De Table Ronde a few years later. “The new means, which since Mallarmé, the Futurists, and the DadaISTS have restored to poetry its freshness and its slapping force – I have applied them, above all since the revolutionary days of May 1968, to find, with some companions of spirit, a poetry of the show was devoted to the eve of the Paris uprising in November 1967, Julien Blaine castigated the works on display as a “funeral procession (the burial) – made official by the anthologies and most particularly by Stephen Bann – of concrete poetry.” Aside from the Brazilians and a few others, the poets who actually belonged to the movement were nothing but “systematic utilizers of a process without originality, where it is difficult to tell whose work is whose,” while another third of the show was devoted to epigones applying “an absolutely identical method.” Yet Blaine was himself a master of the art, producing works like “Exp(losion),” a brilliant example of “structure-content” included among Bertini’s screen prints in the portfolio of Chopin’s Festival de Fort Boyard, “The Last Attempt of the Individual English Poem,” a fold-out calendar that opened up to reveal an empty personal agenda in the avant-garde review Approches. Founded by Blaine and Bory in 1966, Approches gradually tapped the potent mix of concrete and visual poetry, pushing radical experimentation to shocking extremes in works like Jochen Gerz’s gritty “Batman,” published in the final issue in 1969. Gerz displayed in horrifying graphic detail the angry determina-
tion of a young generation of poets intent on using every means in their power to shock and stun contemporaries out of any possible sense of complacency.

Bory, who also worked with Blaine and Gerz in the radical experimental review and publishing venture Agentzia, articulatet a more lyrical critique of language and its media, informed by the rise of semiotics and post-structural theory in the mid-1960s. Exploring the dynamic tension of emotion and intellect, visceral perception and conceptual interpretation, sig-
rifier and signified, Bory approached concrete and visual po-
etry as means to “impose a route than never stabilizes” on the sense-making functions of media in photography, film, the printed word, and above all the book, which became the site, subject, and focus of some his most creative experimentation. “The pages behind dead / The pages ahead not yet born,” the poet wrote, describing his vision of the medium and its com-
ing transformation, which he sought to anticipate in works like Soon “Every visual book prepares for this grandest ex-
plision/It’s a matter of seeing the dispositive of an emotion here/placed inside our space …/the book finally considered as method, dream, watch, child of concrete forms/In reading the wait, doubt, concentration become living things under our hands/So the book consistent with language reading dispenses with incalculable instants/the fraction of time in which a concept surges forth, astonishes, annihilates itself, Incessant read-
ing …” Filled with images of books floating on the sea, words in the sand effaced by pounding waves, jumbled type falling on late medieval figures in paintings from the age of Gutenberg, Bory’s 1979 Post-Scriptum announces the “apocalypse” of print media in the modern age, just as this gilded typewriter does, crusted with toy soldiers fighting among colossal letters, one in a series of multiples the artist produced in the 1970s. Yet Bory also favored more direct, confrontational strategies. Mixing life-sized letters with nude bodies in provocative of works of photomontage, publishing the profoundly unsettling images of “Batman,” he joined Gerz and Blaine in demanding an unblinking eye as one of the editors of Agentzia. Bristling with graphic images of war, seductive advertising, televisions, apparatus of bureaucratic communication, the review pulled no punches. Agentszi: “accepts only reader-militants who are ready to assume responsibility for the blow their conscience suffers.
in reading,” the review proudly warned. Issued in the Agenzia book series, Jean-Claude Moineau’s Quick Read is every bit as disturbing as Gerz’s poem, albeit in different ways. Like many of Bory’s experiments, Quick Read operates like a flip-book, rattling off a series of images that blend together, producing a nearly cinematic effect: schematic representations of soldiers, tanks, rifles interspersed with full frontal photos of a nude female model displayed on a standardized grid, each body part tagged with various nomenclatures, most of them signaling her as a target for some sort of military or sexual assault. Blurring together in this relentless barrage, the signs and symbols of global communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to together in this relentless barrage, the signs and symbols of global communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to expose the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to expose the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to exposing the single underlying message of modern mass media, of communications – euphemistic, hateful, enticing – finally join to

“everybody read a thousand times until it has disappeared, here it was, big as life. Vietnam was real, bloody real. The word was set in a festive atmosphere. The Bon Marché behind was decorated already for Christmas. People stood in front of the word, reading the letters, puzzling, commenting. This grotesque ugly word, a suffering word.”

From Brussels, Arias-Misson went on to create a series of increasingly elaborate public poems in cities across Europe, many of them staged in Franco’s Spain. “In Madrid” took a more dy- namic approach. Parading his giant letters across the Spanish capital with the help of friends, the poet spelled out a stream of words as the group split apart and reassembled in various permutations, pausing at significant landmarks in a mobile kaleidoscope of pointed displays: ‘arma’ (weapon) in front of the Parliament; ‘amar’ (love) before the headquarters of Civic Guard; ‘dada’ outside the literary café El Gijón. “The city is a text,” Arias-Misson explained; “fashion, traffic, the city may be analyzed as a systems of signs, which may then be seized on a linguistic model.” Treating the streets, buildings, and monuments of Pam- plona as a semiotic grid, “Punctuation Poem” drew a crowd of several thousand curious onlookers who followed along as life-size commas, question marks, parentheses, and other signs “set out a subversive political reading of the long sentence running through the city,” Arias-Misson remembered. “The organizer told me the secret police would draw their guns if I did not stop!” Confrontations with the police in fact became a staple feature of the public poem, which consisted not so much of the
letters and signs as the response they provoked, the disruption of everyday life in the city. “It constellates the reals of the street, people, what they say, vehicles, buildings, etc. The material word is only the trigger.” Stretching a sheet of plastic across one city street, Arias-Misson waited patiently until frustrated drivers finally smashed through the “poem” with their cars, a technique he also employed to block the entrance of Amsterdam’s Stedelijk Museum at the opening of a major concrete poetry exhibition in 1970. “We also handed out man-size plastic S’s to the public. You see them going under the sheet before we got it fixed,” Arias-Misson reported in De Tafelronde, describing the response to “Plastic Poem,” a collaborative piece he carried out with the Italian visual poet Ugo Carrega. “Although they did not have the courage, these first S’s, to break through the material they did become really involved in it.” By the time the two poets secured the banner, a “goodly crowd” had assembled outside in the pouring rain. “I harangued them as to the importance of poetry in a man’s life and how they were not objects of poetry, far from it; they assumed the subjective and objective faces of the poetic process itself, objective by virtue of their configuration, of the materials they were involved in, of how they could be read, and subjective by virtue of their consciousness, of their assumption of their own poetic mutation; why, I asked them, be subject to a poetry exhibition? be a poetry exhibition!” Breaking through physical barriers, participants in Arias-Misson’s poem were exhorted to take a forceful, conscious role in shaping work that extended beyond exhibitions and museums. As active engagement with the social and political concerns of the day, poetry belonged to the life of cities, streets, people. Expressed with mounting urgency by radical poets and artists through creative innovation in many forms in the years around 1968, the same conviction underlies the complex and distinctive work of the East German artist Carlfriedrich Claus. Certainly no friend of the oppressive Communist regime, Claus remained committed to the revolutionary vision of Marx throughout his life. Tucked away in the small Saxon town of Annaberg, the poet kept his distance from the state, but he vehemently rejected the notion of “inner emigration,” the escape into quiescent personal life many had chosen, first under the Nazis and later under Communist rule in the East. Instead, Claus threw himself into the precarious world of underground art, an active network of nonconformist poets and painters, whose work is featured in the catalog for another Beinecke exhibition, Fun on the Titanic. Banned from showing his work in exhibitions of official culture, he played a central role on the alternative circuit in East Germany, but he was also one of the few who succeeded in forming close ties with the West. The concrete poet Franz Mon became a lifelong friend, as did Arias-Misson, and Pierre and Ilse Garnier (who was born in Germany). Frequently published in De Tafelronde and other Western reviews and anthologies, Claus’s work is strikingly beautiful, contemplative, often dreamlike and serene. But like other more shocking and aggressive forms of experimental poetry, it also seeks to rouse viewers to revolutionary consciousness, a visceral awareness of the potential for radical transformation of the world slumbering within each of them. Drawing inspiration from the Marxist philosopher and “concrete utopian” Ernst Bloch, Claus takes the materiality of language and its media as a means to invoke a kind of productive dialogue between conscious and subconscious, mind and body, physical markings on the page and emotional states, as passionately inscribed lines and fragments of text merge into indistinct shapes and patterns, the words themselves barely legible as the handwriting on both sides of translucent sheets interfere. It is in this in-between state of the “not-yet-conscious” that forgotten yearnings for a better future take shape and converge in material form in the world of the present, with the physical capacity to transform them into a reality, as Bloch wrote in The Principle of Hope. Often displayed in glass to show both sides at once, Claus’s poetry offers a window onto other worlds through the “material semiotics” of the now.
VIAGGIO TRA LE NUVOLE

ALLA RICERCA DI SE STESSI

ARMES CONTRE DRETS HUMANS

VIETNAM

UNA ESCLUSIVA DI
GRAZIA

POESIA VISIVA

gli DEI
“But does there exist a revolutionary essence of the avant-garde?” Posed on the cover of Bory’s latest review, L’Humidité, the question appears next to photographs of four experimental poets, each of them bearing a hunting rifle – Arias-Misson, de Vree, the Dutch artist Herman Damen and, in lead-off position, Sarenco – the caption underneath: “Italy: Summer ’72: at last, the smoldering fuse of Italian poesia visiva seemed to have ignited, setting off an explosion of radical new energy that infused the movement as it captured the attention of politically engaged poets and artists everywhere. Proclaiming 1972 “The Year of Poesia Visiva,” Sarenco and de Vree led the charge in the new review Lotta Poetica, “Poetic Struggle,” which featured Bertini pointing the barrel of an absurdly outsized shotgun right in the face of its readers on the cover. “A poetry of the visual enters the scene as a means of active transformation of society, either at the level of language and paralinguistic media, or at the level of support for the world class struggle (the exploited),” Sarenco and de Vree declared in the lead editorial, followed by rousing testimony from Eugenio Miccini, Michele Perfetti, Franco Vaccari, and Emilio Isgrò, all prominent artists of poesia visiva. “It is at this point that the mechanism of the literary revolt springs into action; it is at this point that the poet ... places himself at the conscious head of the revolution of the visual poet ... places himself at the conscious head of the revolution of the visual poet.”

In April, Lotta Poetica announced a boycott of the 1972 Venice Biennale, which had invited poets to send a small set of carefully pre-selected works in order to lend “a little patina of ‘poetical license’ in Sarenco’s eponymous 1971 poem ‘They are trying to neutralize a cultural phenomenon of vast scope, like that of poesia visiva, reducing it to the level of consensus art and minimalizing it historically, at the very time artistic movements are also being discovered and launched elsewhere ... as presents of American imperialism and the Atlantic pact.” Signed by Sarenco, de Vree, Arias-Misson, Damen, Bory Miccini, and others, a second petition threatened to boycott the Milanese gallery L’uomo e l’arte unless the group received written assurances that none of its work would be sent on to Venice. “The hour of the poet: let’s take a stand against unmaskings” in the next issue, Sarenco inveighed against artists who betrayed the revolutionary cause, starting with Carlo Belloberti, hailed as one of Italy’s foremost concrete poets, whose dubious history under the Fascist regime he underscored, while a subsequent installment stamped the words “German-Swiss re-action” across the program for a Hamburg exhibition of “visual poetry” that featured Gomringer and the Vienna school of concrete poets. Poesia visiva was not to be coopted or tamed. At the center of it all was the explosive alliance of Sarenco and de Vree, who had joined together the year before to found Lotta Poetica in the northern Italian city of Brescia. Stridently Marxist by the time de Vree met him, Sarenco had been exploring his political and confrontational start. A poetry of the visual is “a Trojan horse,” and it wages war like a guerilla. Eugenio Miccini, 1971

At the center of it all was the explosive alliance of Sarenco and de Vree, who had joined together the year before to found Lotta Poetica in the northern Italian city of Brescia. Stridently Marxist by the time de Vree met him, Sarenco had been exploring the crosscurrents of visual poetry, media criticism, and political engagement that informed avant-garde experimentation in Italy since the early 1960s. Forging a close friendship with Miccini, one of the pioneers of poesia visiva, in 1964, Sarenco gradually built up an extensive network of ties with others working in the field, both at home and abroad, before establishing his base in Brescia, where he founded the review Amodo in 1968 and, two years later, a gallery by the same name. Scrawled on a photograph of a young woman stooping to pick up a cobblestone to throw at police during a street demonstration, the words “poetical license” in Sarenco’s eponymous 1971 poem must have appealed instantly to de Vree, who had integrated images of protest and violent confrontations with authorities into his own work since “the revolutionary days of May 1968.” The two seemed inseparable. Published in June 1971, the first issue of Lotta Poetica announced the merger of Amodo and De Tafelronde around the express aim of the new journal “to impose a continuous battle on two levels: a) at a linguistic level for the destruction of the cultural structures of bourgeois society, b) at a political level at the side of the avant-garde of the working class and the student movement.” Working together, Sarenco and de Vree tapped their respective networks to assemble an impressive team on the editorial board – Bertini, Miccini, Perfetti, Chopin, Arias-Misson, Gerz, Ulrichs, to name a few. As Lotta Poetica rallied experimental poets from across Europe around the banner of poesia visiva, they expanded the enterprise to include an exhibition space, Studio Brescia, issuing over twenty catalogs for individual and collective shows in
the next few years, “Everything depends on the organization in Brescia of the new gallery …, which will be the center of poesia visiva,” de Vree wrote Chopin in July 1972. “The latter leaves us no respite on the side of the exhibitions, which will be numer-ous before the end of the year (in Italy, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium).” Absorbing more and more of his time, de Vree’s new alliance with Sarenco sparked tension with Chopin, who worried he was turning his back on ten years of common endeavors in order to devote himself exclusively to work that had more to do with political engagement than experimen-tal poetry. De Vree pushed back. Chopin’s “engagement against dictatorship” and partisan devotion to sound poetry had “lim-ited the number of those who are on the path you prefer” just as the commitments of poesia visiva had done in his case. “If you feel you are being hurt by my evolution, it is up to you to decide” whether to continue collaborating. As for the label ‘poesia visiva,’ “it momentarily serves to define where we are with evolutive poetry.” In the end, the friendship survived. But Italy remained de Vree’s “center of gravity” for years to come.

It was a late discovery. By the time Lotta Poetica entered the fray, experimental poets in Italy had been refining the art of poesia visiva for the better part of a decade, creating stunning, provocative, sophisticated works, an entire rich reservoir on which the magazine was able freely to draw. As elsewhere in Europe, 1963 was a crucial year, witnessing the founding of the Gruppo 63 and the Gruppo 70, both key moments in the emergence of the Italian “neo-avant-garde.” While the first retained a tight literary focus, the latter brought poets, painters, and musicians together, seeking to develop new forms of creative expression capable of withstanding the multimedia onslaught in a new era of modern mass communications and consumer society. The two groups shared a critical awareness of this challenge, however, and there was significant overlap between them. The semiotologist, writer, and cultural critic Umberto Eco participated in the founding congresses of both as did the poet Lamberto Pignotti, who had helped set the stage with a critical article on the sly ubiquity of technology in culture, “The Industry You Don’t See,” published in 1962. “The poet should ask himself whether the flower of his dreams isn’t perhaps made of plastic before releasing his imagi-

nation at full gallop,” Pignotti wryly noted, arguing the need for a new poesia tecnologica to surpass outdated forms of literary expression. Presiding over a conference on “Art and Communication” in May 1963, Pignotti launched the Gruppo 70 with Miccini and Giuseppe Chiarini in Florence. Alongside painters and musi-cians, many of the leading artists of what would soon be called poesia visiva joined the group: Perfetti and Isgrò, Ketty La Rocca, Lucia Marucci, Luciano Ori, and others, all determined to expand the reach of poetry by integrating, adapting, but also sharply criticizing the sophisticated techniques of mass me-dia. By the end of the year, collective exhibitions of Gruppo 70 introduced one of the sig-nature gestures of poesia viss-i
v-a

more powerful means of diffusion” in collaborative works aimed at direct public intervention in the promulgation of so-cietal norms and attitudes. Staged at a Florentine gallery a few months prior to the conference, the multimedia spectacle Poesie e no. Performance still photo-graph, 1965. From left to right: Eugenio Miccini, Lucia Marucci, Lamberto Pignotti, Antonio Bueno.

For the rest of the decade, the artists of Gruppo 70 contin-
ued to explore the subversive potential of mass communi-
cations passed through the “ideological filter” of impreva-
honing their skills in public per-
formances, installations, festi-
vals, and exhibitions, as the passion for engagement with social issues only intensified with the rising tide of political protest. Poetry and Not passed through several iterations, as did Luna Park, named after a popular amusement franchise, another multimedia spectacle and installation that employed film collages, “ornaments,” and comic book characters to engage audiences in ironic conversation. But it was in the practice of “extraction / abstraction” of text and im-
ages from print media that the new art of poesia visiva achieved its most eye-catching and provocative results. Published in the first issue of Adriano Spatola’s review Geiger in 1967, the anony-
mous poem “Guerra” superimposed the Italian word for war over photographs and advertisements (including one for baby food) on pages torn from popular magazines, each one different in the three hundred copies of the elaborately produced run. Repeated countless times to form a martini glass / ice cream dish overflowing with phallic shapes, ‘guerra’ interferes, disturbs, and complicates, while also highlighting the original intent and mes-
sage of a fashion photograph in the copy shown here. Along-
side war, imperialism, and the fetishization of commodities, the media’s depiction of women was a frequent target of poesio visiva. Pignotti, who worked with students at the University of Bologna to assemble a taxonomy of roles assigned to women by mass media, addressed the problem relentlessly, from his earliest collages to the “Visible / Invisible” series of the 1970s and works of sustained semiotic criticism, such as his massive 1978 survey, Brand and Feminine: Woman Invented by Advertis-
ing. Yet the most powerful assaults came from women artists themselves. Although excluded from the early theoretical de-
bates and first exhibitions of Gruppo 70, La Rocca and Marcucci excelled at the art, cataloging texts and images from the media to produce brilliant, so-
plicated, compelling works that were at the same time lu-
cid indictments of the power of mass communications, par-
ticularly when it came to the subordination of women to the coercive masculine gaze. “Who says that / they are all / equal / us? / beautiful / and / sweet,” clipped lines from the tabloids read, juxtaposed against headshots of women applying makeup on a jet black background in one of La Roc-
ca’s collaged poems, while another splices the round cutout of a photograph showing Vietnamese children eating over the clipped out photograph of a nude model in seductive pose, all beneath the phrase “healthy as our daily bread.” Another model, this one draped in a towel and smiling, appears in Marcucci’s “Warrior’s Rest” next to the headlines “Vices on the Street” and “Sport Money Sex.” Joining the model’s gaze is a single male eye, positioned as a kiss on her cheek in a bold black circle, while the imperative “change” hovers over both. Shown here in a spread from an exhibition catalog produced by Sarenco, de Vree, and Miccini in 1971, La Rocca’s “Us 2’ uses a traffic sign to indi-
cate the parting ways of a couple, displayed alongside a work by Mirella Bentivoglio, another prominent woman artist, “I love you.” One of the most widely circulated images of poesia visiva, Bentivoglio’s poem breaks apart the Italian ‘amo’ (‘I love’), in-
serting the English word ‘am’ between the open lips of a wom-
man, with the ‘o’ left as a lingering expression dangling underneath. Graphically stunning, often beautiful, the collage works of La Rocca, Marcucci, and Bentivoglio instantly catch the eye, but there is nothing quick, easy, or smooth in the effect of reading these poems. Coded for immediate, intuitive recognition and comprehension, the familiar elements of commercial advertis-
ing and tabloid headlines become strange and confusing when taken out of context, mixed together in jarring combinations that disrupt the flow of mass communication by breaking the hidden rules of its underlying syntax and grammar: “Poetry is violence, that is to say the transgression of linguistic and stylistic
tradition, transgression of the pitiless logic of the society of op- silenced and its methodic and authoritarian rationalism," Miccini wrote, summing up the approach developed in Italy over the past decade in 1971. "Poesia visiva occupies itself in an obsolete fashion with the problems of communication and information theory; it seeks, with the aid of expansions, rejections, overprint- ing, interruptions of the channels of communication, to revive conscience, . . . to provoke a deviation of the senses, an ironic inversion of meanings, and finally a surprise that augments their information value." Displaying a virtuoso command of the in- struments of modern mass media, Italian visual poets trained them against the system in a sophisticated assault on everyday language that could not help but appeal to experimental poets across Europe: "Poesia visiva is a 'Trojan horse,' and it wages war with fumetti (1968 and 1983)."

Lamberto Pignotti, 3 postage stamps with fumetti (1968 and 1983).

Fumetti were another favorite weapon in poesia visiva’s assault on the power of mass media. Applied to allegorical representations of Italy on postage stamps, the result is both subversive and comical in these tiny works by Lamberto Pignotti, who often employed humor to mar- velous effect. "Lately when I read about war or economic problems, I get the hives," Italy remarks in one of the speech balloons. "No one loves me, everyone hates me," an early modern warrior laments while wielding a pike in another.

Luciano Caruso wrote a thesis on cor- mino (guanto, one of the ear- liest forms of visual poetry (and a favorite technique in the Baroque art of poesia ar- ticiosa), which he often used as raw material in making artist books, unique handcrafted works that explore the physi- cality of media with remark- able sensitivity and skill. A profound artistic reflection on the opacity of writing systems, Caruso’s Silence displays a se- ries of texts inscribed in non- Western linguistic characters, each placed alongside another text in Italian hand under a rice paper enclosure treated with an emulsion, allowing only glimpses at the underlying messages to shimmer through. Broken lines of a running commentary in Ital- ian follow along beneath, but the sense is lost through constant interruption. Pairing texts in Coptic and Italian, the page shown here is accompanied by the lines: "x)but they are divided ac- cording to the bodies that are how to say their instruments and yet the division that//." The sentence is never completed. Mate- riality and writing are also the subject of intense exploration in the works of Ugo Carrega, who joined Arias-Misson in setting up the plastic poem/barrier at the entrance to the exhibition Carusos Silence: Block-Poem (1975).
of concrete poetry at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Expressing a potent critique of instrumental language, Carrega insisted that the reduction of writing to abstract code for conveying verbal content had obscured the actual physical presence and visual properties of the signs, symbols, and material supports on which it depended. Yet these too had something to say. “Everything is language.” Writing in rust on sheets of metal, sculpting letters into a three-dimensional “Tower of Babel,” composing poems on ponderous plaster disks and broken panes of glass, Carrega underscored the weight and substance of writing, but also its vulnerability and fragility, its metamorphosis through ageing, accident, even weather in his “Wet Words,” painted in tempura and splattered with drops of water until they ran. Physical transformations of media became elements of composition, conveying a poetic meaning beyond words, to which they lent “a given reality” on sheets of crumpled paper. Carrega also integrated stones, splinters of wood, and gestural strokes of paint as material signs to extend the range and expressive possibilities of writing. “The Trace Outside-the-Body renders visual the internality of the Body,” he exclaimed. “The Trace is therefore SIGNIFIED + SIGNIFIER, making it possible to know (REVEIL in short) the Body in Time and in Space.”

Carrega’s recondite meditations on the materiality of writing and language have taken us a long way from the passionate battles of Lotta Poetica. Refusing to join in protests against exploitation of artists by galleries and museums, the poet himself admitted to being “outside the times,” and he sharply rebuked Sarenco’s “romantic” outbursts as no less captive to instrumental language than the commands of the authorities he attacked. “The artist is social in his creative moment, a moment that finds its spur in the unhappiness of that instant, a variation on what is known, on thoughts, on what has already been said, done, seen,” Carrega declared. “He is social in setting himself outside to recognize and reveal – reveal.” Fiercely independent, the anarchist poet kept his distance from dogmatic commitments and collectivist political engagement, much as Chopin had done. But he belonged to the same world. “Writing has served the notaries, the bureaucrats, the merchants, the politicians, the cheats and frauds in general. Now writing must also return to serving man.” Sharing this conviction with experimental poets across postwar Europe, Carrega strove to develop a new material language capable of capturing expressions of human thought and experience that transcended the drive for utilitarian communication, a search that led him – again like Chopin – to emphasize the role of the body. Writing for Carrega was physical, the act of leaving material traces of a lived moment on material supports, in which mind and body were both deeply involved. Citing André Breton, the poet used the example of a chess move to illustrate the complex process of negotiation and indeterminacy he was trying to capture. Once the move was decided and the hand rested on the chess piece, an “intermediate stage” entered into play as both opponents considered the consequences before action was finally taken. “It is in this interregnum that the principle of writing is founded. Primary, originary, creative writing, at a distance from secondary writing like that of conventional common codes.” Blending both, established signs of communication with gestures that emerge in the tense “passage” between composition and execution, Carrega’s poetry seeks to preserve the moment of expression in the material practice he called the New Writing. “How does the mind behave when dreamed by the hand?” This eloquent piece – also a work of poesia visiva – attempts to convey an answer.

Ugo Carrega, Vito Carrega, Come si comporta la mente sognata dalla mano? (1980).

Ugo Carrega, Non si muore di fame, ma … (n.d.).
POETRY MATTERS

Matter mattered in the experimental poetry of the avant-garde. From the day Mallarmé grasped “paper” as a compositional element, allowing it to “intervene” in the sense and flow of words (“the others”) on the pages of Un Coup de dés, the physical dimensions of media took on a life of their own, shaping the adventures of poetry, which in turn fashioned them to express meanings that lay far beyond the abstract reach of words.

Typography, layout, inks (and paint), material supports, signs, symbols, letters became substantial, not only as visual components, but often for their tactile qualities and weight. Safely locked behind a sheet of glass, “factory” of living human bodies on physical airwaves and electromagnetic vibration, captured on magnetic tape, laboriously reworked in analog recordings (here the digital comes to our aid, allowing visitors to “touch” the poetry directly, or rather the poetry to touch them, through the use of MP3 players and stereo headphones). Experimental poetry mattered.

Visual, tactile, aural, corporeal, the physical properties of medium push against the boundaries of the two-dimensional page, seen as mere surface for words to occupy, bearing meanings that are themselves present only in the remotest sense, abstract, conceptual, highly contrasted. In fact, as we all know, pages have more than one side. Without pausing to think, we turn them over to follow the succession of words on the back. Depending on the quality of paper and the intensity with which the words were inscribed, ink or impressions from the other side may penetrate, ink or impressions from the other side may penetrate, ink or impressions from the other side may penetrate the physical and esthetic planes merged. POEMX pronounced us… the people were articulated by the poemx, the soaked rubber letters became the word POEMX, the beach became beach, the waves waves, the blue sky the blue sky, and all the people watching and laughing and taking pictures became all the people watching and laughing and taking pictures.”

Alain Arias-Misson, 1970

… the man-size foam rubber letters absorbed the salt water, then the physical and esthetic planes merged. POEMX pronounced us… the people were articulated by the poemx, the soaked rubber letters became the word POEMX, the beach became beach, the waves waves, the blue sky the blue sky, and all the people watching and laughing and taking pictures became all the people watching and laughing and taking pictures.
A passion for Arias-Misson, the quest to make poetry come alive, to give it body and movement in physical space, continues to inspire new works and new experimental forms. More than fifty years after he staged the first public poem in Brussels, Arias-Misson is again taking his giant letters outside for a stroll at the Pompidou Center in Paris and here at Yale, on Beinecke Plaza, for the opening of Beyond Words in September: “Institutions and museums in Europe seem to have woken up to the ‘novelty’ of the Public Poem,” he muses—“does that portend the End of the Public Poem?” It is, however, the new technology of holographic projection that has fired the poet’s imagination. Having first used lasers to inscribe swirling three-dimensional lines of poetry into solid blocks of plexiglass, Arias-Misson is now able to animate them. Sweeping around and behind a solid block of wooden letters—the word ‘tree’—set inside a holographic vitrine, figures composed of miniscule verse speak themselves as they dance and embrace in the poem “Eden.” At long last, Arias-Misson remarked, the dream behind his painstaking sketches for the plexiglass poems of the 1970s has become reality.

Machines of a different sort loomed large in experiments of the 1960s and 1970s, which explored mechanical processes of physical transfer alongside other material dimensions of poetic media. “Microphone = phonetic poem. Typewriter = mechanical poem;” Pierre Garnier wrote, arguing that a common modus of operation in these technologies had given rise to similar strategies and practices in the new genres: “The voice hits the magnetic tape. The keys under the impulsion of fingers hit the ribbon that prints the blank page through percussion. Speech actions and writing actions appear in parallel. Creation of linguistic fields, of points of energy, of superimpositions, of words decomposed into their letters, words that mutate into energy … constellating points of energy, of superimpositions, of words decomposed into pieces of freestanding sculpture like Carrega’s Tower of Babel and You don’t die of hunger alone, but … composed of six pieces of broken glass inserted into a wooden base. Merging across the panes, the words here form patterns of interference, as they do in Claus’s work, but the depth and dimensionality of the poem are far more pronounced. A similar effect is achieved in John Cage’s ‘plexigram;’ Not Wanting to Write Anything about Marcel… composed of broken glass inserted into a wooden base. An article about Cage’s ‘plexigram;’

The placement of words on receding sheets, numbered here in red ink, captures the rocking effects of waves in minutes of time—a curious echo of the decaying sheets, numbered here in red ink, the work can be “read,” but, in keeping with Cage’s penchant for chance, only with help from the I Ching. A set of detailed instructions lays out the possible interpretations, depending on a roll of the dice. Arias-Misson, author of the “man-size” signs and letters of the public poem, also produced three-dimensional works in plexiglass, such as the one sketched in this preparatory map for “Sonnet LX—W.S.” (c. 1975).

Among them and never repeating and yet language. Writing in words. Books without pages or books without end.”
case of the sound poet Chopin, who spent the last years of his life hammering away deep into the night to produce a vast stream of typewriter poem collages in the *Mille pensées*. The typewriter was certainly an icon of experimental poetry, appearing on the cover of *Approches* and again in Bory’s gilded sculpture, *Fin des mots*, “End of Words.” But there were other machines, and other physical processes of media transfer as well. Wolman invented a method all his own, using scotch tape to detach strips of print from papers and then dissolving the plastic film residue with an alcohol solution after adhering the distorted type onto wood, canvas, or another support. A change in the manufacturer’s formula spelled an end to Wolman’s “Scotch Art” in the 1970s, as the tape became insoluble, but the artist went on to work with photocopier machines in new experiments with manipulation and the media of transfer in works like *Pocket Portraits* and *Dueling Duhning*. Photography and screen prints were some of Bort’s favorite tools. Passing headlines, images, and the work of fellow experimental poets through multiple stages of “obvious manipulation,” Bertini turned the process of material transfer into a form of art in the review *MEC*.

Where does it all leave us? Explorations of physical media and the muttering of poetic language seem remote from the concerns and realities of the digital age, where sounds, images, fragments of text stream and merge almost effortlessly in the apparent absence of material constraints. Yet experimental poets of the postwar avant-garde also believed they were living in an age of new, almost limitless technical possibilities. It was precisely the flood of “instant” communication, the (relative) ease with which text, image, and sound could be mixed and matched in powerful new forms of messaging that inspired many poets to explore the nonverbal aspects of media as autonomous elements of composition. The focus on materiality was, as Lambert noted, often a sign of “resistance” to the flow of signifiers that seemed always to point in the wrong direction. “Information is an organized distraction,” as Gerz put it in *Agentzia*, amid images of television screens, advertising models, casualties of war. Taking up the visual signs and symbols of mass media as raw material, the artists of *poesia visiva* developed a sophisticated arsenal of techniques aimed at uncovering and short-circuiting the processes of manipulation that made them such an effective means of conveying “subliminal” messages of authority. Chopin and others did much the same with sound, tearing it loose from the “totalitarian” import of language, mixing it up in channels of elaborate postproduction technology. Computers were just another tool. Beat poet Brion Gysin used them early on, working with the programmer Ian Somerville to produce a stream of verbal permutations in “I am that I am.” So too did Bory, whose archive is a superb source for exploring the transition of visual and sound poetry to digital platforms. Nearly all of the strategies and techniques developed in the postwar era easily find application in computer technology, which not only enhances them but presents entirely new possibilities as well. Arias-Misson’s “Eden” fulfills what could only be a dream in the 1970s. Projected on the marble pines of Beinecke Library, two works by the Canadian poet David Jhave Johnston brilliantly illustrate the potential for new forms. Generated by computer, letters take corporeal form only to melt in “Bitfrost for Viola,” a poem that echoes Bory’s *Gutenberg Apocalypse*, while *ReRites* performs an endless series of permutations on poetic language mined from big data servers, passed through algorithms, and “edited by a human.” Poetry beyond words thrives in the digital age. The question is not one of endings. The question is, where do we go from here?
Exhibition
Beyond Words: Experimental Poetry and the Avant-Garde
on view August 30 to December 15, 2019
at
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library
Yale University
121 Wall Street, New Haven, Connecticut
www.library.yale.edu/beinecke

Outside Cover

Inside Cover

Frontispiece
Jean-François Bory, La fin des mots (1979).

Design
Gabriele Linke Grafikdesign, Berlin
www.linke-design.com

Print
Ruksaldruk, Berlin

Paper
Condat Matt Périgord
TOUTE
PREDUCTION EST UN ATTENTAT À
LA LIBERTÉ DE L'HOMME. LA POÉSIE, COMME
JE LA CONçois, N'EST PLUS LA FEMME DE CHAMBRE
DES PRINCES, PRELATS, POLITICIENS, PARTIS, OU ENCO-
RE DU PEUPLE. «ELLE EST ENFIN ELLE-MÊME : UN PHÉNO-MÈNE»
NE PHONÉTIQUE VOCAL EN SOI DE SOURCE PSYCHO-PHYSIQUE ET
OBJECTIVEMENT STRUCTURE À L'AIDE DE MOTS, DE SONS ET DE MO-
YENS MéCANIQUES ET GRAPHIQUES (ENREGISTREMENTS ET ÉCRITURES)
LE VIEUX VERBAL PUR N'EXISTE PAS. IL SUSCITÉ TOUJOURS LE SON OU
LE BRUIT D'ÔUI IL PROVIENT ET DONC IL EST LE SIGNE. LE POEME EST UNE
EMISSION DE RESPIRATION AUDIBLE (AUDITION) OU SILENCEUSE (LECTURE),
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SPECTACLE CINÉTIQUE TOTAL QU'HENRI CHOPIN PREVOIT PAR L'UTILISATION
INÉVITABLE DE LA MACHINE MCE PAR LES ONDES.» L'ŒUVRE SONORE EST
LE RÉSULTAT D'UN TRAVAIL D'ÉQUIPE SOUS LA RÉGIE DU POÈTE ET LA
REPRODUCTION IDEALE EST CELLE RÉALISÉE SUR DISQUE H.F. «LA EN-
CORE LA MACHINE EST INDISPENSABLE. » CELA VA DE SOI QUE LE
RECIPIENT (SI CE N'EST PAS LE POÈTE) ET L'INGÉNIEUR DE
DE SONS (EN CE QUI CONCERNE MES ENREGISTREMENTS)
CONTRIBUENT PERSONNELLEMENT À L'ORIGINALITÉ DE LA RÉALISATION » À L'AIDE DE
L'ÈRE ÉLECTRONIQUE LA POÉSIE
NE PEUT PLUS ÊTRE UN
FABIAU.»