

making words

i come at concrete poetry obliquely, via a research project (*Writing_Making: Object as body, language and material*, RCA, 2016) during which 'new' methods for bringing writing closer to making were developed; methods that explored the potential of making as a means of generating writing and of writing to generate, or to contaminate, making. influenced by Object Oriented Ontology, craft making was considered as an intimate engagement with, or a form of contact with, another object; as an altered state that might afford privileged access to the 'inside' of an object, or a 'strange stranger', to follow Tim Morton.

can making function as a model, or a spur, for settling deeper into inter-object relations? what voices might emerge from such relations and how might the various objects [maker, material, image, language] that cohere around the activity of making be presented? how might maker, and audience, become an object among objects and access the subjectivity of the strange stranger?

during the project, i unconsciously repeated, then consciously adapted, some of the moves of concrete poetry. rules for the construction of a poem follow the actions required to hollow a block of clay. a word imposed on the making process conflates signifier and referent, resulting in the paradoxical obfuscation and clarification of the signified. an ongoing work, *A Game of JUG*, is influenced by the image-text-ground playground of concrete. instigated by Martin Heidegger's essay, 'The Thing', and the subsequent purchase of a jug made at Prinknash Abbey [home and workplace of dom sylvester houédard] working out the limits of this particular game is a form of speculation on the reality of a jug.

referring to this work [and that of dsh and Ian Hamilton Finlay], i will discuss the play between ideogram, pictogram, glyph and grapheme; the play between the fully-achieved concrete poem and the under-achieved concrete poem. in the former, form and content are isomorphic : form = content / content = form [Mary Ellen Solt on *pilot plan for concrete poetry*, the Noigandres group, 1958]. in the latter, perhaps metaphor sticks its nose in where it isn't wanted.

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