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## From Concrete to Digital Poetry: DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD OF CONTINUITY? A Personal Report from Norway

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# From Concrete to Digital Poetry: DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD OF CONTINUITY? A Personal Report from Norway

By Ottar Ormstad

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## Abstract

In this contribution I discuss my practice as concrete and visual poet with a special mode of creation from paper-based works to digital video-poems. I trace my path through the paper by describing some of my earlier works that built the basis for the concepts behind the animated works svevedikt (2006), LYMS (2009), when (2011), and natyr (2013). My aim is to express my artistic position at the time I visited the E-Poetry Festival in Paris 2007, and thereby entered the “e-lit-family” for the first time. It is my wish to explain how I experienced the festival in several ways: the relation between the presentation of papers and works, the variety of the works and performances, the impressions of meeting a well-established community, and a comparison between the festival and arrangements in the late sixties from an ideological perspective. To accomplish this, I will (after a short discussion of terms and contextualization) provide a description of my background as visual artist, and the different sorts of poetry I have created before I entered the electronic literature community in 2007. Then I want to focus on how I was influenced by the festival and the community. Two questions I will answer in this personal report include: Have I experienced my move into digital poetry as a continuum or a discontinuity from my practice as concrete poet? And, how did the e-lit community influence my activities?

## The Concepts Concrete and Visual Poetry: A Brief Discussion of Terms

I created my first works of concrete poetry around 1968 and started up practicing it again in 1999. Generally, I decided not to do any kind of historical or contemporary

research in that field. My thought was that concrete poetry is extremely conceptual and therefore easily gives possibilities to unconsciously get inspired by others' ideas. Being aware of this, throughout the time, I carefully *avoided* reading books or web sites that might have shown works that could have influenced me unconsciously.<sup>1</sup>

This decision resulted in an unintended consequence: my theoretical understanding of the terms concrete and visual poetry was on a low level. I had a basic idea about concrete poetry from the sixties, but had no real understanding of how to relate it to the term visual poetry. Is a definition of concrete poetry in opposition to visual poetry more fruitful than regarding concrete poetry as part of visual poetry? As I am aware today, there exist several points of view according to this question. I will point out two theoretical works that serve as a background for how I am handling these concepts: one by the American Fluxus-artist and researcher Dick Higgins and one by the German poet and scholar Klaus Peter Dencker.

In his book *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (1987), Dick Higgins<sup>2</sup> documented that visual ways of thinking about poetry have been accomplished around the world for more than two thousand years. He operates with the expression "pattern poem" as "the commonest term for visual poems from before 1900 in which the letters, words or lines are arrayed to make up visual images" (232). Concerning "concrete poetry" he writes in his glossary of terms that these are "modern visual poems which are constructed out of arrays of letters such as the alphabet, as opposed to using photographic or conceptual structures that are not visual" (231).

Higgins uses the term "visual poetry" broadly, as "the intermedium between literary and visual art" (233). Differently from those who use the term "concrete" in opposition to "visual", he prefers to describe concrete poetry rather as a purely letter-oriented kind of visual poetry, especially applied to works from the fifties and sixties.

Other viewpoints concerning the relation between concrete and visual poetry as well as the relation between word and image are presented in the informative study (2930 footnotes) *Optische Poesie* (2011) by German visual poet and researcher Klaus Peter Dencker. In this book Dencker outlines how poets and artists from different movements like Surrealism, Constructivism and Dadaism agreed upon working for a closer interrelation between art, literature and music (17ff.)<sup>3</sup>

Because concepts are not true or false, just more or less fruitful, it is up to us to decide how to use them, as long as we are precise in our language. Today I prefer the terminology of Higgins. I think that not using "concrete" in opposition to "visual" avoids many discussions about definitions that may take away the focus from the spotlight on poetry. This extremely brief historic overview of positions and terms might give an idea of the varieties of works that were created according to different concepts, definitions, and traditions that were developed throughout the past. By

making use of Higgins' classification, I will now briefly outline how concrete poetry was received in Norway in the sixties.

## Concrete and Visual Poetry in Norway

According to Higgins, a research in libraries in Bergen and Oslo before 1987 resulted in no discovery of pattern poetry from earlier time in Norway, even though interesting works have been found in Sweden and Denmark (93). Concrete poetry has never been big in Norway<sup>4</sup>. When the Norwegian poet Jan Erik Vold presented his first book (*mellom speil og speil* 'between mirror and mirror', 1965), most of the poems were traditional, but some of them were designed like pattern poetry. At this time Vold also collaborated with poet Helge Rykkja. Together they self-published one book each (Vold: *blikket* 'the look'; Rykkja: BOK "BOOK", 1966). In a recent personal conversation with Rykkja, the poet reported that his work at this time was understood as "concrete" because it was handwritten. The only book that I clearly classify as concrete poetry is *blikket* by Vold, which is a very conceptual work. Together these three books can be regarded as an introduction to concrete and visual poetry in Norway, but neither Vold nor Rykkja went much further on in this direction.<sup>5</sup> Even though these books are very different, according to Higgins' definitions they can all be seen as visual poetry. I think this example demonstrates the difficulty of categorizing visual poetry, but it also shows that using "visual poetry" as a wide concept is fruitful.

In the process of my artistic practice, Vold and Rykkja influenced me in different ways: through their use of visual effects, the conceptuality of their works, and their poetic language in direction of the everyday life. At the end of the sixties, a few works of concrete poetry by young poets (myself included) were published in an anthology edited by Georg Johannesen, Dag Solstad, and Jan Erik Vold (Gruppe 68, 1968). Later however, I felt that this exciting way of making poetry visual had great potentials that were far from being realized.

In the late nineties I decided to restart my practice as concrete poet, being stimulated by Jan Erik Vold, whose personal phone calls and discussions were motivating. He then already had been the number one poet in Norway for a long time, and had selected two of my works in his anthology of Norwegian poetry "through the century" *Moderne norsk lyrikk* ('Modern Norwegian Poetry'), edited with Kjell Heggelund and published in 1985.

## Starting up Publishing and Becoming a Yellow “y”

What first appealed to me in the late nineties was a new world of graphic design. This indicated a different way of thinking than what was connected to the old typewriting system. I began to learn how to operate with Adobe InDesign on a Mac and realized the importance of being independent of others in the technical process, although it took quite some time until I felt free enough to go forward on my own.

The first book I published was *het still* (2003), containing forty-four poems, each one composed of four words in Norwegian. Each word was put in one of the corners on the square page (18x18cm), many of them with a language-sound in common. I have decided for a random word-selection, so there was no system according to where most of the different words should be located on the page. As it is printed, the position of the words forces readers to “walk” around with ones eyes on the page, but also gives freedom to choose the direction and order of reading the words. Any route however would not result in a clear sentence. The books title is a creation of the Norwegian word for silence: “stillhet”.<sup>6</sup>

I regard the book as a basic study of the relation between words and space, which turned out to be a powerful and inspiring start for my first concrete poetry project after a long pause. One of the print publishers I consulted in a letter commented that this “sixties-project” was interesting, but that the timing was “a little too early” for this kind of books. Later, Marko Niemi created and published an animated version of “het still” in the Finnish web-magazine *Nokturno* (2007).

The title of my second book *AUDITION FOR FENOMENER UTEN BETEGNELSE* may be translated as ‘Audition for Phenomena without a Name’. The square 18 cm format remained, but the selected font made four letters together constitute a square. The order of the letters was selected after a system in which the only vocal is the second letter. The chosen first letter was either l, r, s or t, and the last two were selected to give a fair chance for some semantic words in Norwegian to turn up, and also to create the end-rhyme. For instance, if I wanted to give a priority to the English language, I might have selected “sh” as one of all the possible combinations of two consonants. Each double-page consists of thirty-two combinations, the system continues on the first twenty-four pages, which generates seven hundred and sixty-eight variations. On the consecutive pages, patterns are created out of these variations.

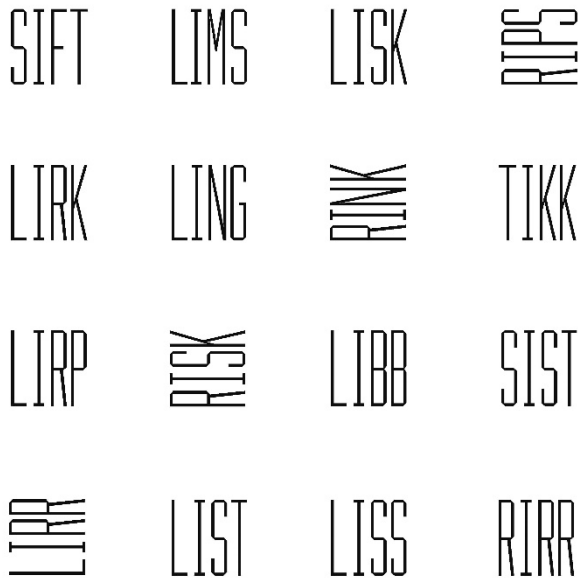


Fig. 1. Patterns and play. An example from *AUDITION FOR FENOMENER UTEN BETEGNELSE* (2004). Courtesy of Ottar Ormstad.

What turns up in this system may be seen as a challenge for semantic structures. Some combinations appear as words that are known for many of us in different Latin languages. Others are probably not in use in any language. Some may exist in a dialect or have a different meaning in various languages. LYMS, the title of my second work of electronic literature, was created by accident in this system. All letter-combinations in the book are composed in the same structure, some are semantic and some are not (yet).

The book may be seen as a research of the potentials in Latin languages; many combinations of letters are not in use yet, but may be picked out by phenomena that may exist without our knowledge. By our way of thinking here and now, we use the language for making categories. In other times and in other places people may think differently, and may need other words. My hope was that the reader would appreciate this way of creating a mixture of seriousness and humour.

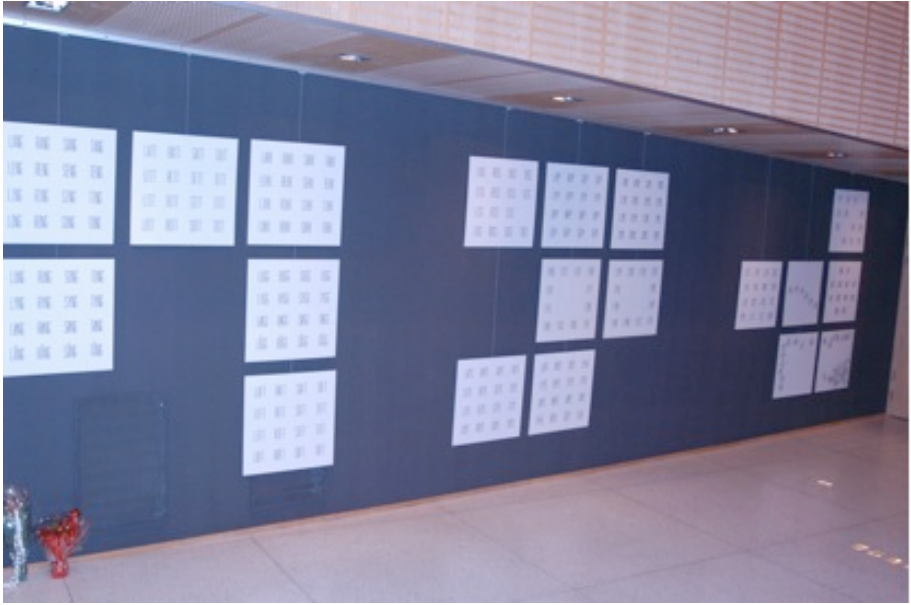


Fig. 2. Photograph from the exhibition in Sandvika kulturhus, Norway 2005, presenting large-scale pages from the book *AUDITION FOR FENOMENER UTEN BETEGNELSE*. Courtesy of Connie Ursin.

When I later presented a collection of three small books, one of them contained large, yellow letters (*y gul poesi*) (*'y yellow poetry'*, 2005).<sup>7</sup> So far all poems were published and printed in black on white paper. This book was the start of my use of both the colour yellow and the extended use of the letter "y". This has even resulted in the identification of myself with a yellow "y". The letter therefore symbolically turns into a "personal character". Additionally, I am extending the use of this letter while at the same time creating new words by changing spelling and replacing single letters with a "y", i. e. "rymymbyr" (from my animated video-poem *when*, 2011).

In 2006 I published my most important work as a concrete poet: *telefonkatalogdiktet* ('the telephone-book poem'). When reading (!) the telephone-book of Oslo, I had picked out about 1100 family names on a very subjective, poetic basis. By ordering them after numbers of letters and syllables, I have created different structures and pictures. This was possible by the use of the font "Courier" that gives all letters the same space on the line, just like old typewriters did. This creates a connection not only to the old way of making concrete poetry, but also to pattern poetry.

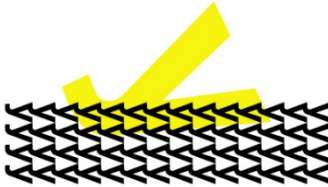


Fig. 3. “The poet in the sea” (from *bokstavteppekatalogen*, 2007). Courtesy of Ottar Ormstad.

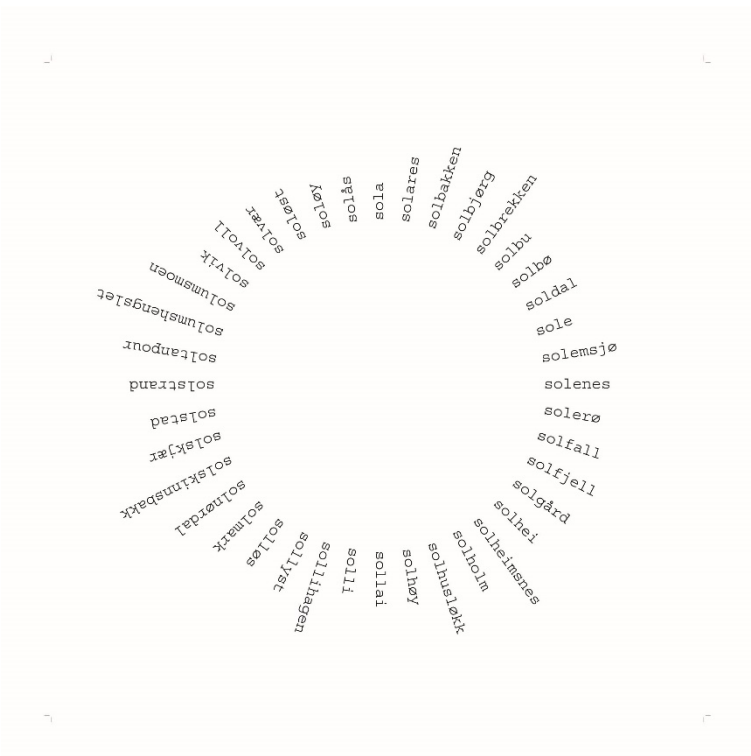


Fig. 4. Family names starting with “sol” (‘sun’). From *telefonkatalogdiktet*, 2006. Courtesy of Ottar Ormstad.



## Web-poetry and the Invention of “letter-carpets”

When I published my books, I usually exhibited a selection of prints from the books in different venues, such as in public libraries. Pages were extended to 70 x 70 cm and mounted on cardboards. Later, I decided to buy and work on an Epson 9600 in my own studio making digital prints on cotton paper as graphic art. I created many pictures solely based on letters, which I call “bokstavtepper” (‘letter-carpets’). In 2007 some of these were presented along with a catalogue, the “bokstavteppekatalogen” (‘letter-carpet catalogue’) in a solo-exhibition at Galleri Briskeby, Oslo.<sup>8</sup> The Canadian poet and visual poetry ubuweb editor Derek Beaulieu has recently analyzed the project in a [blog-post](#).

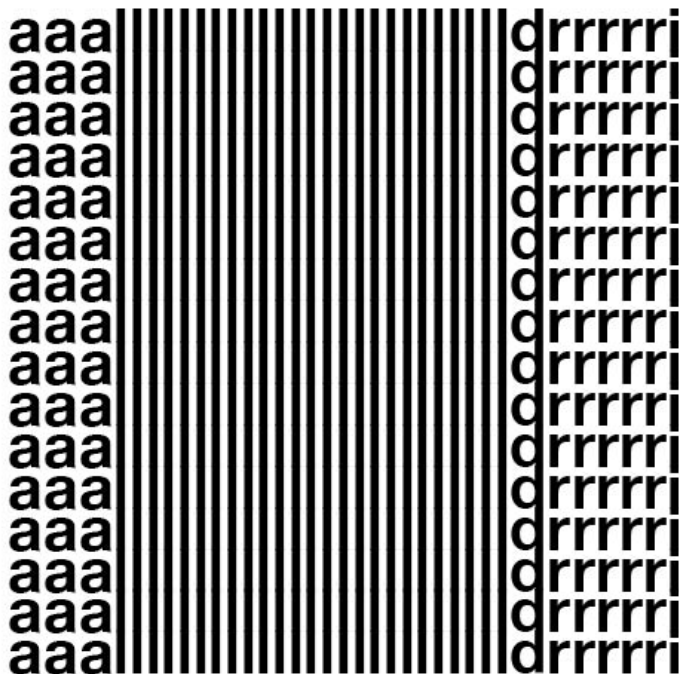


Fig. 5. “aldri” (‘never’) from the catalogue of the exhibition in Galleri Briskeby, Oslo 2007. The picture was printed in 75x75cm. Courtesy of Ottar Ormstad.

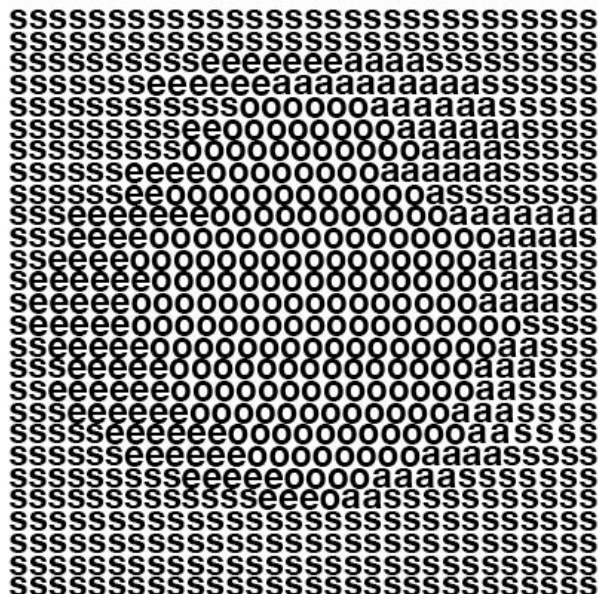


Fig. 6. "oase" ('oasis') from the exhibition catalogue in Galleri Briskeby, Oslo 2007. The picture was printed in 75x75cm. Courtesy of Ottar Ormstad.

In 2005, I was introduced by Audun Lindholm<sup>9</sup> to the editors of the Danish literature and art web-magazine Afsnit P: Karin Wagener and Christian Yde Frostholm. When I presented them a manuscript I then was working on, they suggested we should collaborate and make an animation together. I was immediately enthusiastic about this idea. I composed the letters and words in a way very close to how I created concrete poetry in the sixties, and Yde Frostholm converted the pages into Flash. The resulting svevedikt (2006) consists of seven poems in Norwegian.<sup>10</sup>

## Meeting the Community at the E-Poetry Festival in Paris

Since I started up working again on the basis of my earlier works of traditional concrete poetry in the end of the nineties, I continued to extend my works into new forms. When I published my first book in 2003, I put “1” down on the spine, indicating that this was the start of a series. In my mind I imagined publishing maybe ten rather different books of concrete poetry.

At the time when I read an announcement in *Afsnit P* about an arrangement called the “E-Poetry Festival” that would take place in Paris, I had published several books, all rather different, arranged exhibitions of graphic art and published web-poetry. I felt that I had reached a level where I was comfortable with encountering others’ works, and I suddenly became very curious about what I might find there.

Coming to the festival with my background, all alone and without any preparation, was an interesting experience. The division between the presentations of papers in daytime at the University Paris 8 and the artist works in the city in the evenings was not only functional, but for me demonstrating a serious combination of theory and practice in an inviting way. I had language problems with some of the high-speed English-speaking, but in general the translations from French were good. I was impressed of the wide range of dimensions being focused: from aspects of language, philosophy, history, aesthetics, translation, and teaching to questions of programming and preservation. Even with my language handicap and lack of research background (although educated as a sociologist), my impression was very positive. I felt a new world of interesting questions turning up in my mind.

Afterwards I wrote a review of the event in which I characterized the festival as overwhelming. I was fascinated specially by the works of Patricya Rydzok, Jody Zellen, Aya Natalia Karpinska, Stephanie Strickland, María Mencía, Chris Funkhouser, Eugenio Tisselli, Jörg Piringner, Talan Memmott, and also Tibor Papp’s sound-poetry. All of them so different!

My favourite work became “Instant Memory” by the French poet Patricya Rydzok, a work with a narrative in a political direction: against war, pollution and clone manipulation. Together with a rather sad song by Eric Satie played on a piano, the voice of her son created a special mood. The programming was done in Flash, in a way the viewer can click on one out of three words on each photo, and by this go on to a new picture to make a new choice. Plain and elegantly done. In her performance Rydzok improvised her own choices on stage. “Instant Memory” touched me deeply, and became the most important work in my process of realizing that E-Poetry offered a new universe of creative possibilities.

The extremely wide range of works gave me a feeling of an explosion of artistic freedom. I was immediately inspired and soon started thinking of the possibility of creating something myself for the next festival in 2009. Even if I found some of the works more or less uninteresting for me, many of the contributions encouraged my own thinking. I appreciated the wide range of works the committee selected also because I felt that there were no "poetry police" involved, ruling how electronic poetry should (not) be created.

## **Experiencing Ideological Changes in Paris**

As we know, the main cultural ideas may be changing a lot in a short time. Going through the art history in the twentieth century, many different directions have been dominant from time to time. For instance, when visiting the yearly, big exhibition of French art in the Grand Palais in Paris around 1990, my impression was that it was as if most of the very expressionist paintings had been created by one artist only. Some years later the exhibition was quite different and exposed a wide range of more dissimilar works. This is an example of how quickly trends may change, not in fashion only, but also in art. A period with the total focus on expressive paintings may come suddenly to an end, and be replaced by other articulations. The understanding of why cultural transformations happen may be difficult. The society changes quickly, and it will normally be impossible to realize this before after some time. Being in the game since the sixties, I've seen cultural expressions come and go, sometimes like fashion. This has been accompanied by a lot of critics pretending at a game of objectivity, determining what's good and bad by following the trends.

In some fields technological development has been important, in others less. As an example, the invention of new sensitive films like the Kodak Tri-X in the fifties was important for a revolutionary change in the motion picture production, making it possible using hand-held cameras. This had tremendous consequences for the content of the films, and resulted in "the new wave".

But what happened to the jazz? In the sixties I was enthusiastic waiting for the next album by John Coltrane; his music seemed to be some kind of logic development of the last forty years of jazz history. I'm sure most of us took it for granted that this evolution would go on and on. Now, forty years later, we may conclude that the stylistic evolution of jazz largely came to a standstill, even though new technology helps with better sound. Of course much good jazz music has been presented later, but the long-time development from style to style seems to have met a turning point in the beginning of the seventies.

And what happened with the concrete poetry after the sixties? As earlier mentioned, I later always had the feeling of a potential that was far from being realized. Would times change again? When the publisher told me that the beginning of the century was a little too early for the concrete poetry project I proposed – was he just politely rejecting my work or was this a smart analysis?

In the Western world, the sixties were dominated by new ideas by the young generation born after the war. The resistance against the war in Vietnam, the atomic bomb, and discrimination because of race, gender, and sexuality went hand in hand with wishes for new cultural expressions. At bottom was a strong feeling of freedom: anything is possible, feel free!<sup>11</sup>

By using examples from different fields of art, I want to illustrate the complexity of understanding this kind of cultural changes. Expressions that were unthinkable in one period may be well received before and after. What is the contemporary situation in concrete and visual poetry? And what does electronic poetry actually mean now?

These kinds of questions were on my mind at E-Poetry 2007 in Paris. Suddenly the festival reminded me of my time as a student in Oslo in the sixties. I remembered the excitement of being part of a new wave: radically new ways of making theatre, films, literature, music, and art were presented, often in collaborative projects. Influences came more or less consciously from the Surrealism and Dadaism of the thirties, but also with elements of hippie culture. In Paris the mix of different artistic expressions in combination with the enthusiasm of being part of something new and exciting made the festival a great experience for me.

My decision to leave concrete poetry in the beginning of the seventies was a result of ideological changes at that time. The student revolution turned into a more traditional political project, and as a result the cultural movement changed direction into culture for the working class: radical in content, but in a traditional form. This meant that art and literature should show and support the fight for the working class, women's rights, against racism and so on. The consequence was a farewell to abstract painting and all kinds of "difficult" culture. I supported this process at that time, but I was not happy when I later realized that the room for avantgarde art quickly collapsed.

## **The Value of E-Lit Communities**

Of course it was obvious for me that a well-functioning festival like "E-Poetry" necessarily had a strong organizational fundament, and I was told a little about its historical start in Buffalo in 2001. I realized that the openness and freedom I felt

were part of the basis of the community, and that the interdisciplinary cooperation I had been missing from the sixties also was another important element. I understood how these dimensions in combination with resources and new technology made it possible to present such a remarkable and massive festival program.

I think the way that I “slipped” into this community is an example of how communities function. In 2007, I drove into the festival as a lonely poet from nowhere, having created some works outside of any community; my sole collaborative project at this time was the web poetry piece *svevedikt* published on *Afsnit P*. Meeting the festival machine, the thought of making something for the next festival immediately turned up. While working on this, the following year I was invited by Scott Rettberg to do a reading and screening of my web poetry at the E-Lit in Europe conference in Bergen, Norway (2008). This was an essential event that made me feel more part of the community since I had productive conversations with several participants. There were also some very impressive works shown there. For me the works by Christine Wilks *Fitting the Pattern*, Noah Wardrip-Fruin *Talking Cure and Screen*, and Judd Morrissey with Mark Jeffery and Fanny Holmin (*The Last Performance (dot org)*) were the most interesting.

Working with my contribution for the next E-Poetry Festival, I realized that I did not only need an animator but also somebody who could compose and play the music I would like to accompany the video. Happily, the composers of the Norwegian group Xploding Plastix (Hallvard W. Hagen and Jens P. Nilsen) were positive when I presented my project-idea. Thus, *LYMS* was born, animated by the Norwegian artist Vibeke Luther in 2009.

*LYMS* was created on the basis of some of my earlier works of concrete poetry. In the video I use music that was specially composed for the exposure of a collage of selected books, prints, photos, and concrete poetry) in a digitized new context that turns my earlier static concrete poetry in motion. Thus, the video serves as an archive of a selection of works I made (ranging from the sixties up until now), put together in one.

In addition I made use of black and white photographs I have developed in the darkroom. The first part was based on my web poetry, which again was based on my way of making concrete poetry in the sixties. But instead of using Norwegian words only – inspired by many different languages used within the e-lit community – I decided to integrate different words from several languages without translation. Therefore, people will experience the video differently dependent upon their language background. A person knowing just one language will probably get less out of it than a multi-lingual viewer. On the other hand, the sounds of the words are also important, so the impression will be different based on the focus of the viewer.<sup>12</sup>

I created *LYMS* solely for the purpose (and hope) of being screened at E-Poetry 2009 in Barcelona. Later, *LYMS* has lived her own life in the world of experimental film festivals and was screened in sixteen countries throughout 2009-2012.

Additionally, in 2010 *LYMS* was screened at the 4<sup>th</sup> international conference and festival of the Electronic Literature Organization at Brown University, Rhode Island, USA, and also at the ELMCIP Electronic Literature Communities Seminar in Bergen, Norway in the same year. I was present at both events, and as manifestations of the power of the community through screenings, performances, paper-presentations, and social events, both these events were of significant importance to me.

After what I experienced as a success with *LYMS*, I decided to go on with a new project and new material with the clear goal to be screened at the 6<sup>th</sup> E-Poetry Festival 2011 in Buffalo, New York, which it was (*when*).<sup>13</sup> The excellent collaboration with the composers from Xploding Plastix was repeated.<sup>14</sup>

One conclusion that is absolutely clear to me is that my video productions would not have been created at that time and in these dimensions<sup>15</sup> without motivation from the community. The opportunities for screening at the festivals have been extremely important for the progress. Being one of the few artists that do not academically research along with the artistic practice, I have felt welcomed and respected. On the other hand, I have been surprised that not many others like me have turned up. In Buffalo 2011, there was a discussion about recruiting people to the community. I think that opening the community to new artists should be much more of a focus. Generally, I would appreciate more open, critical, and democratic discussions.<sup>16</sup> This includes honest critical commentary. If someone told me: "I hate your work, but I love that you do it", it might be a good start for an interesting conversation!

It is a paradox that our community is not recruiting more artists from other practices (such as film and art) in a time where the interest for electronic literature and new media is exploding. Another wish I have is to make connections to other existing communities. My experience is that there is a lot of interest for our work among people who are working with experiments in the film world.<sup>17</sup> These are examples of some of the possibilities that await us!

## Conclusion

Finally I will answer my own question: do I experience my move into digital poetry as a continuum or discontinuity? Without a doubt the answer is a continuum. From the start I presented my first book in connection with an exhibition, and I quickly went from printing in a shop to the acquisition of a large printer. When I was for the

first time given the possibility by *Afsnit P* editor Christian Yde Frostholt to transform a concrete poetry manuscript to a web project, I was immediately enthusiastic. All the time I have been searching for new technological possibilities and different media forms for artistic expression. Meeting the community in Paris in 2007 made me start up with *LYMS*, which was a way of extending older works with new technology in collaboration with an animator and music composers.

Looking back, I find this development naturally connected to the ideological changes described earlier. Thanks to the thinking in our time, the enthusiasm for interdisciplinary collaboration, and the positive openness in our e-lit community, I have been able to create digital poetry in a way I think consistent and coherent with my work as concrete poet from the sixties into the present. I feel I have been driving down the road of continuity.<sup>18</sup>

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## Notes

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1. Once it actually happened that Philippe Bootz showed me a page at the E-Poetry festival 2009 that was close to one of mine. I was then happy to know that I previously did not know anything about the presented poet and his works.
2. Dick Higgins (1938-1998, born in England, raised in the US) was among the pioneers of the Fluxus movement. He was poet, printmaker, composer, film producer and publisher. Together with his wife, Fluxus artist Alison Knowles, he created computer generated literary texts in the sixties. In an essay published

in 1966, Higgins coined the term “intermedia” to describe the inter-disciplinary activities that became prevalent in the sixties.

3. What follows is a brief collection of international viewpoints collated by Dencker worth to note. He for instance quotes Goethe who in 1823 wrote that “Wort und Bild sind Correlate, die sich immerfort suchen...” (“word and image are correlates that constantly search for each other”). In Romania in 1924, painter Victor Brauner and poet Ilarie Voronca presented a manifest for visual poetry under the name “Pictopoezie”. In addition, Dencker points out artists like Swedish Öyvind Fahlström, Eugen Gomringer (Switzerland/Germany) and the Brazilian Noigandres group (de Campos), who after the Second World War worked together for developing and categorizing different sorts of poetry with a visual aspect. In 1963 Pierre Garnier (France) published a manifest for new phonetic and visual poetry (“Poèmes à dire” and “Poèmes à voir”), signed by 25 poets from 14 countries. In this manifest, the undersigned agreed on classifying the “new poetry” in six groups. Two of those were concrete and visual poetry (differently from Higgins’ definition), and a third category was connected to sound.

4. In an e-mail interview conducted in 2010 by Per Bäckström, Jan Erik Vold talks about the resistance towards concrete poetry in Norway in the sixties. The critic Paal Brekke, known as a liberal and modernist poet, in 1965 wrote a “warning” against concrete poetry, even before it existed in Norway!

5. There are some exceptions. In his book “kykelipi” (1969) the inner cover pages consists of the two capital letters “JA” (YES) formed by the absence of small letters in Courier in a structure saying repeatedly “nei” (no) all over.

Later Vold recorded a number of readings accompanied by jazz music, among others together with the trumpet player Chet Baker (1988). He has done numerous of translations, and with Robert Creeley he was co-reading in Norway 1972. Rykkja has presented several books of (in this connection) more traditional poetry, but is still an active supporter of visual poetry.

6. Melissa M. Lucas provides a close reading of the book (and my later *svevedikt*) in her master thesis titled *Scandinavian e-texts in Context* (University of Washington, 2009).

7. Also animated by Marko Niemi: <http://www.nokturno.org/ottar-ormstad/>

8. In 2013 I will present a new solo-exhibition in Galleri Norske Grafikere (the Gallery of the Norwegian Graphic Art Organization) in Oslo.

9. Lindholm founded the Norwegian small press “Gasspedal” in 1999 and is also the editor of the Norwegian Literature Magazine Vagant (where Scott Rettberg wrote the electronic literature column “Platform 2” from 2010-2011). In 2010,

Lindholm has started up an animation project accessible at <http://vimeo.com/gasspedalanimert>

10. svevedikt is selected as part of The ELMCIP Anthology of Electronic Literature (DVD, 2012).
11. It may be no coincidence that Barack Obama has picked out the title of the 1970 Lee Dorsey / Alain Toussaint album "Yes we can" as a slogan for today? In 2008 will.i.am produced a song with this title where the lyrics were almost entirely excerpts from one Obama speech.
12. My practice of not translating, but putting words from different languages together, resulted in presenting my views and works at the conference "Translating E-Literature" in Paris 2012 under the title "Non-Translation as Poetic Experience".
13. Both videos *when* (2011) and *natyr* are produced as HD. in Final Cut Pro, animated by German filmmaker Ina Pillat.
14. The music is partly played by several instruments, both traditional and also unconventional like toys and glass. This is done in combination with a voice and electronic sound effects, all synchronized with the pictures (or intentionally not). The composers were comfortable with my participation in the whole process, and the procedure again became an inspiring experience for me.
15. Even if I have received funding from Norsk Forfattersentrum (LYMS) and Norsk Kulturråd/Fond for lyd og bilde (*when* and *natyr*), I have spent a lot of resources myself.
16. After E-Poetry 2007 there was an enormous engagement in a mail discussion initiated by Simon Biggs concerning nakedness on stage and also our relation to other parts of the world. Mail debates like this can be easily organized, and are important since there are long periods between our meetings. I would also prefer planning more space on the timetables for discussions when we meet. In Buffalo, many seemed to have a desire for this.
17. For instance LYMS was accepted at the Zebra Poetry Film Festival in Berlin 2010, and *when* at "Traverse Video" in Toulouse 2012.
18. This does not mean I will stop working as I did before. I will go on creating books of concrete poetry and print visual poetry as graphic art parallel to animations. Later I will publish a book presenting new concrete poetry under the title "FROM THE SIXTIES WITH LOVE". One poem from this book is presented in the anthology *A Global Visuage* edited by Jörg Piringer and Günter Vallaster (2012).