

Roberto Simanowski

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Concrete Poetry in Digital Media: Its Predecessors, its Presence and its Future***

By Roberto Simanowski

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Abstract

How does concrete poetry develop in digital media? What is its intention? What is the meaning behind it? Does the play with the symbolic orders of language question social patterns as in concrete poetry in the 1960s? Does it rather aim to free the word from its representational, designational function towards the "pure visual"? And how should one approach it? With a meaning driven soul asking for the message behind the technical effect and disparaging any brainless muscle flexing? With a spectacle driven soul enjoying all the cool stuff you can do with programming and embracing de "pure code" as new avant-garde? This essay discusses the aesthetic concept of concrete poetry and places the subject into the ongoing discussion of "software-art" and the aesthetic of the spectacle. It begins with a look back to the predecessors of concrete poetry in print media before introducing to examples of concrete poetry in digital media.

I would like to start my talk about literature in new media with a reference to Goethe, the unimpeachable hero of canonised German literature. There is a line in his most famous play "Faust" in which the main character complains: "Two souls, alas, are dwelling in my breast, / And one is striving to forsake its brother"¹ I understand Faust's feeling entirely. When it comes to electronic literature or art I feel two souls in my breast as well. One of them says things like this: "There are many spectacular effects people program in digital media. If they only would find some meaning to hook on to it! But they can't think of any because they are programmers not poets. They have an idea of how to make an action happen on the screen but no idea of what this action could mean. They flex their technical muscles and it looks great. But they have nothing significant to say."

This soul in my breast grew up when I studied literature and was trained to look for meaning behind words and between lines. Lets call it the meaning-driven soul. It is

a sceptical soul not impressed by all those buzzwords we have been hearing since literature was married with electronic technology and given the name “interactive literature.” What regards hyperfictions for example this soul is not satisfied with a link simply connecting words, which are close to each other in the dictionary such as “child” and “childhood” without adding meaning to the passages that are linked. If such link only allows reading more about the child’s childhood right now, if the link only serves navigational purposes, my meaning-driven soul is not gona like it. Now, here is an example able to appease this soul.

In Caitlin Fisher’s hyperfiction “These Waves of Girls” about a female character in search of her lesbian identity, there is a passage in which the character reveals her dreams about her teacher Madame Renault.² The girl dreams about sneaking into her teacher’s bed. This line links to a passage starting with the sentence: “I am growing up but not out of my grandmother’s bed.”³ The new passage tells about the girl’s experiences in earlier years. About her and her grandmother’s storytelling and singing in the dark, about this feeling of being close together in bed. This link between *bed* and *bed* is first of all lexical. But there is more to it. The link also suggests taking the depicted experiences in the linked passage as an explanation for the desire revealed in the linking passage. It allows us to read between the lines or files respectively. The link is not just a means of navigation it adds meaning to the text, it becomes text itself.⁴

Now, the other soul in my breast has been shaking its head since I started talking. This soul does not worry about the “shift away from prior modes of spæc-tator experience based on symbolic concerns (and ‘interpretative models’) towards recipients who are seeking intensities of direct sensual stimulation,” as Andre Darley notes in his book on *Visual Digital Culture. Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*.⁵ This soul simply enjoys all the cool stuff you can do with programming without asking the pedantic question *why* you did it. This soul I call the *spectacle-driven soul*. The irritating thing is that this soul does not just love the spectacle, it argues with what it learned in some art history classes.

Thus, this soul quotes from Susan Sontag’s essay *Against Interpretation* from 1964: “In a culture whose already classical dilemma is the hypertrophy of the intellect at the expense of energy and sensual capability, interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art.”⁶ This soul perceives the “prevalence of technique and image over content and meaning,” which Andrey Darley notes in his book, as the reenactment of the formal aesthetics one a century ago.⁷ In those days the presentational rhetoric was favored over the representational rhetoric, that is a visual sign was itself considered valuable, it was not supposed to represent meaning, it was allowed to present itself as such. Every meaning-focused soul that tries to understand an abstract painting knows what the spectacle-driven soul is talking about.

The keyword in the debate of formal aesthetics was the *pure visual*. My spectacle-driven soul argues that whenever the purpose of the digital code is not to represent meaning but to display itself as such, this code becomes the modern equivalent of the pure visual: it is *pure code*. Thus, the effect without depth can be justified with all the authority art history is able to provide. What is disparaged by my one soul as brainless muscle flexing is embraced by my other soul as avant-garde. One can imagine what a life it is to endure two souls like this in one breast.

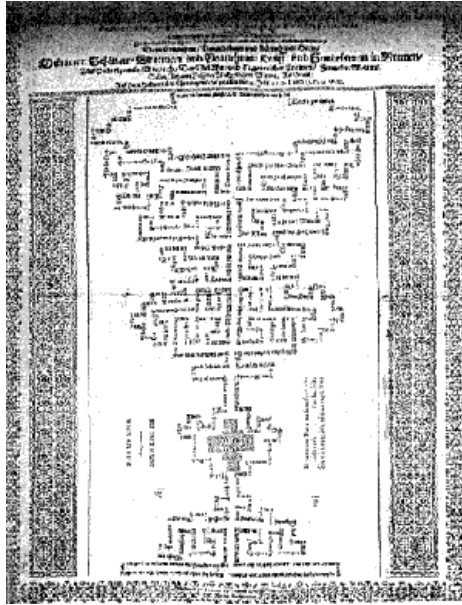
Having introduced to the two souls in my breast I already revealed the main concern of my talk. I am going to discuss the question of meaning in digital literature. More precisely: The meaning of concrete poetry in digital media. I will discuss the aesthetic concept of concrete poetry and place the subject into the ongoing discussion of "software-art" and the aesthetic of the spectacle. I will begin with a look back to the predecessors of concrete poetry in print media before introducing to some examples of concrete poetry in digital media.

1. Concrete Poetry in Print Media

The fusion of the visual and the literary is always an existent though rarely recognized aspect of the history of books and writing. As early as antiquity there has been text, which developed an additional meaning by the way it was presented.



Johann Kinkel, 1774, Stockholm

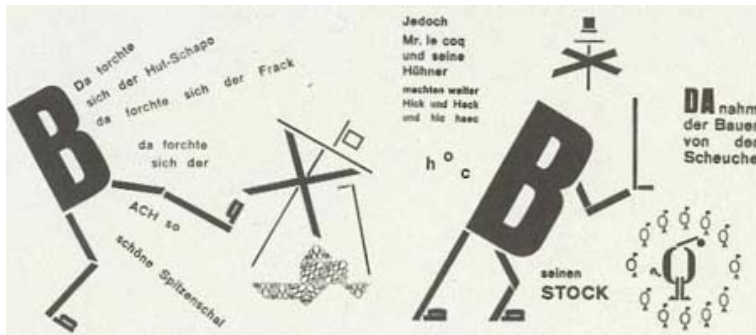


To the wedding of Bremen citizens Meimar Schöne and Fenneke Wolters in 1637, Bremen

In the so-called *labyrinth poems* the text line winds its way over the paper like the path through a maze, thereby adding the labyrinth metaphor to the message of the text itself. Our example from the Baroque represents a coherent labyrinth with a clear way forward to the destination. In the *figurative poems* the text shapes a certain figure, in religious context often a cross, in Baroque secular figures as well as here a goblet as a wedding poem for a couple from Bremen in 1637. This poem is an early version of interactive writing, which invites the reader either to turn around the paper or their head in order to perceive the text. The deeper wit of this playing with form lies in the fact that after this performance one feels dizzy as if one had just drunk a goblet full of wine.

The philosophy behind this playing with form, behind this shift towards typography, is to free the word from its pure representational, designational function. While in literature the physicality of language –such as its graphical aspects– normally is neglected and even considered to poison the authority of the text, here the visual form of the word was used as an additional meaning. The word not only represents an object it presents it on the visual level. The goblet is to be seen before one even starts to read.

This attention towards the visual materiality of language increased between 1910 and the 1920's when Futurists such as Marinetti⁸ or Dadaists such as Tristan Tzara⁹ or Kurt Schwitters undertook their typographic experimentation.



Kurt Schwitters, Käte Steinitz, Theo von Doesenburg: Die Scheuche, 1925

Such experiments on the physical level of language were dismissed by Surrealism, which experimented with language only on the level of mental representation. The area of experimental typography was reopened in the 1950's and 60's, now entitled Concrete Poetry. The unifying element of concrete poems is that one cannot read them aloud. In oral form they would lose their design, they are to see or, as Franz Mon entitled one of his essays on concrete poetry, they are "Poesie der Fläche" (poetry of space).¹⁰



Reinhard Döhl: Apfel (Apple), 1965

**schweigen schweigen schweigen
schweigen schweigen schweigen
schweigen schweigen
schweigen schweigen schweigen
schweigen schweigen schweigen**

Eugen Gomringer: Schweigen (Silencio), 1954

A famous example is a piece by Reinhard Döhl where an apple is shaped by the words »apple« plus the word »worm«. Another example is Eugen Gomringer's piece *Schweigen* (Silencio), where in horizontal and vertical lines the word »schweigen« surrounds an empty, silent space. This gap is the point in Gomringer's piece for which all other words are just a preparation because the gap conveys the message that, strictly speaking, silence can only be articulated by the absence of any words. The message does not lie in a semantic sense between the lines but in a graphic sense between the words. However, this piece does not dismiss the representational function of the word in favor of its visual value. Certainly, the message is to be seen but it will only be revealed on the fundament that one did read the surrounding words before.

This cooperation portrays the concept of concrete poetry very well. It is concrete in its vividness in contrast to the abstraction of a term. Thus, concrete poetry deals with the relation between the visible form and the intellectual substance of words. It is visual not because it would apply images but because it adds the optical gesture of the word to its semantic meaning – as completion, expansion, or negation.¹¹ The intermedial aspect does not lie in the change of the medium but in the change of perception, from the semiotic system of *reading* typical for literature to the semiotic system of *viewing* typical for art.

2. Concrete Poetry in Digital Media

Within the digital realm concrete poetry gains two more levels of expression. While concrete poetry in print combines linguistic and graphic qualities of letters, in digital media time and interaction are two additional ways of expression. Letters can appear, move, disappear, and they can do all this in reaction to the perceiver's input. In such an environment the worm finally can eat the apple –and since digital technology has no real concept of end and death, the worm can eat the apple again and again.¹²

The Argentinian Ana María Uribe is an example for the personal continuity within the shift of concrete poetry from analog to digital media. She proceeded from *Typoems*, as she calls her concrete poems in print, to *Anipoems*, her name for animated pieces of concrete poetry, which combine an elegant minimalism with a refreshing humor. David Knoebel calls his animated poems *Click Poetry* of which a good example is „A Fine View“ a short text about the fall of a roofer.¹³ The point here is that the text rises up like the smoke of the cigarette, which may have caused Bill's inattentiveness. The text grows and finally speeds up as if it came towards the reader's face in the same manner as the roofer's experience as he fell rapidly towards the ground.

The aesthetic of this piece is very simple. The words literally draw the reader into the text which itself talks about the ashes of a cigarette falling and shattering against the ground. The ashes, of course, is only the placeholder for the fallen roofer who is mentioned before. Thus, the reader is actually put into the roofer's shoes; the text playfully turns the reader into a character in the text. Needless to say, that the reader will not really feel in danger. This kind of *remote immersion*, one can argue, mirrors the position the other roofers may have. They are in real danger, every day. However, in order to carry on with their life and their job they have no other choice than to think of themselves as *readers*, who observe and remember a terrible accident that never can happen to them.

While all of these pieces do not require the users' action and therefore are somehow reminiscent of the text movies and television poetry at the end of the 60's and the beginning of the 70's,¹⁴ *YATOO* by the Austrians Ursula Hentschläger and Zelko Wiener requires the user's input and works only in an interactive environment.¹⁵ *YATOO* appears as a star that utters text on mouseover contact. The text does not appear on the screen but as an audio file; one side of a star corner activates the female speaker; the other side activates the male speaker. Nevertheless, the text's materiality is realized in the graphics, which transform in shape according to the way one navigates. If one always touches the right or the left side of the corners of the star, one gets a whole sentence and a new harmonious shape of the visual parts of the star. The sentences are admittedly simple –»You are the only one«, for example, which also explains the title's abbreviation– and certainly do not represent the state of art in English poetry. However, this is partly due to the poetics of constraint on which the poem is based because each line can only consist of five words – one for each corner within the star.

On the other hand, the piece gets interesting only via the user's reaction, which adds to the poetics of constraint a perception *in* constraint. In order to understand the given text one has to navigate the star in a certain order. If one does not care and randomly contacts both sides of the corners one will only hear the chaos of words mirrored by the chaos of the visual parts. This may be the comment to the romantic statements in this poem: relationships need to understand and take into account the underlying setting. If one does not, conversation will not take place. Another

understanding would be that to the contrary a relationship might try to liberate itself from such underlying setting. In any case the poetics of constraint – respectively the perception in constraint – is part of the message, a wordless part, which cannot be overheard in our interaction with the piece.¹⁶

3. Decoration and Message

After these examples of digital forms of concrete poetry I want to discuss the poetics of concrete poetry in both print and digital media.¹⁷ Concrete poetry has been accused of being an autistic language and therefore of being incapable of having an impact on the reader's consciousness. Thus, concrete poetry seems to be useless in terms of political interventions. The counter argument is that focusing on the text's materiality implies a reflection on the use of language. It increases our sensitivity to discover and reject all attempts of language instrumentalization.¹⁸ "By the isolation of words from the usual setting of language," as the German scholar Gisela Dischner points out, "the natural way of speaking suddenly appears in a different light, questionable, incomprehensible. The intended patterns of language are being undermined."¹⁹ The American scholar Johanna Drucker states the same intention for the typographic experiments of Dadaism, which "was concerned with opposing the established social order through subverting the dominant conventions of the rules of representation."²⁰ In this perspective, the deconstructive play with the symbolic orders of language is considered to question social patterns and even to have a revolutionary potential.²¹

The revolutionary pathos of concrete poetry in the 50's and 60's will hardly be found in our days. Since the arrival of postmodern philosophy, grand narrations of enlightenment and revolution are not very popular anymore. The postmodern condition caused disillusion and a resignation from ideologies and emphatic messages towards individual, sensual and playful settings. The aesthetical consequence of such cultural disposition may be that the focus of art shifts to *form* as it did in mannerism – another phenomenon of crisis in history.²² The question is whether this focus will have the same intention of instructive disturbance Dischner and Drucker state for Dadaism and concrete poetry.

Considering cultural tendencies Andrew Darley notes –as mentioned earlier– in his book on *Visual Digital Culture* "a shift away from prior modes of spectator experience based on symbolic concerns towards recipients who are seeking intensities of direct sensual stimulation."²³ According to Darley the "prevalence of technique and image over content and meaning", manifested in computer-designed movies such as *Star Wars* (1977), *Total [tot] Recall* (1990) or *Terminator 2*:

Judgment Day (1991), leads to a “culture of the depthless image,” to an “aesthetics of the sensual”.²⁴

Darley speaks of movies, MTV, and computer games. However, the turn of the “reader’ or interpreter” into a “sensualist”²⁵ can be discovered with regard to print and screen design as well. Thus, David Carson’s design of “post-alphabetic text” “refashions information as an aesthetic event,”²⁶ and text in multimedia environments on the screen embodies a shift from protestant enlightenment to catholic revelation, as the German linguist Ulrich Schmitz puts it.²⁷ To quote Robert Coover, advocate of hyperfiction, who in 2000 declared the passing of its Golden Age: there is “the constant threat of hypermedia: to suck the substance out of a work of lettered art, reduce it to surface spectacle.”²⁸

If the transfer of attention from semantics to the surface spectacle is the cultural context of digital concrete poetry, it should be of no surprise that often enough the play with material is only focused on impressive effects, flexing ‘technical muscles.’ In these cases language celebrates itself –as it does in mannerism. In the digital realm language is of course more than the word seen on the screen. The language of digital media is composed of letters, links, colors, shapes and action, which is all based on the code beneath the screen. The language of digital media is the program; which is why Lev Manovich sees the “software artist” as the new type of artist.²⁹

This software-artist, according to Manovich, “re-uses the language of modernist abstraction and design –lines and geometric shapes, mathematically generated curves and outlined color fields– to get away from figuration in general, and cinematographic language of commercial media in particular. Instead of photographs and clips of films and TV, we get lines and abstract compositions.”³⁰ The announced retreat away from the language of commercial media seems to contrast the transformation of artists into designers, which occurred in the 1920’s, helping to change “the formal radicality of early modernism into the seamless instrument of corporate capitalist enterprise,” as Johanna Drucker states.³¹ That the *Generation Flash* “does not waste its energy on media critique,” as Manovich states, may weaken such an assumption. Another argument is that the non-cinematographic *Flash-aesthetics*³² actually is well equipped to serve as the new language of an emerging, rapidly commercialized medium. Finally: most software artists work as designers as well, creating commercial products like online games, webtoys, and multiuser environments.

An example for such Flash-artists is *Squid Soup* a group of designers, artists, and musicians. In their piece *Untitled* written letters and mumbled words are transformed into sound and decoration for a fascinating, somehow hypnotic experience, which has absolutely no intention to be investigated from a semantic

point of view.³³ As Squid Soup declares, their intention is: to create "a feeling of being somewhere."³⁴

An example, which almost paradigmatically embodies the development of concrete poetry, is *Enigma n* by the Canadian programmer and net artist Jim Andrews.³⁵ *Enigma n* was first developed in 1998 as anagrammatic play with the word *meaning*. In print, one could have concretized the change of meaning by a specific order of letters in horizontal and vertical lines, reading one direction as »meaning«, the other direction as »enigma n«. This setting would have revealed the anagrammatic surplus of the letter »n«. In Andrews's digital version from 1998, the letters, which at first form the word »meaning« in contrast to the title »enigma n«, change position and meaning constantly – until it is stopped by the user – thereby giving meaning even to the letter »n« as the sign for a variable number.

Andrews calls *Enigma n* "a philosophical poetry toy for poets and philosophers from the age of 4 up". This description stresses its playful character, which goes far beyond the play of concrete poetry in print. In 2002 Andrews published an audio-visual version with increased sensual effects. In *Enigma n^2* the letters of the word *meaning* are not shown in changing positions, but the word is spoken, manipulated by software.³⁶ As Andrews explains: "The sound itself starts out with the word 'meaning' backwards and then there are two normal repetitions of the word 'meaning'. The program randomly selects a starting point in the sound and a random end point (after the start point). And it selects a random number of times between 1 and 6 to repeat the playing of that segment."³⁷

Andrews is certainly right seeing *Enigma n^2* "as a kind of continuation of *Enigma n* in that it is concerned with the enigma of meaning."³⁸ And indeed, hearing these endless, interrupted, randomly looped attempts to articulate the word »meaning« may support this aim. However, whereas *Enigma n* required contemplating the deconstruction one *sees* on the screen, *Enigma n^2* allows delving into the hypnotic atmosphere of sound mix and visual effects. The original philosophical effort of the anagrammatic play in *Enigma n* has been released; concrete poetry has turned into music or *sound poetry* respectively.³⁹

Thus, one can say that concrete poetry at least partly carries out the same shift from symbolic concerns to sensual stimulation Darley sees for visual digital aesthetics. There are good reasons to assume an irresistible mood of technology itself behind this transition, on both sides of production and of perception. This mood of technology can be marked as digital kitsch on the basis of Ludwig Giesz' definition of kitsch: as giving up the specific distance between I and the object in favor of a feeling of fusion and surrender to the object.⁴⁰ Such a mark, of course, would display an absolute "meaning-centred approach" to aesthetics, which Darley questions in his book: "Is ornamentation, style, spectacle, giddiness really aesthetically inferior or, rather, just different (other) from established motions of literary, classical

modern art? Is an aesthetic without depth necessarily an impoverished aesthetic, or is it rather, another kind of aesthetic – misunderstood and undervalued as such?⁴¹

As already mentioned, Darley seems to have the support of Susan Sontag, who recommends in her essay *Against Interpretation* a deeper interest in “form” in art. He finally suggests we approach the “poetics’ of surface play and sensation”⁴² open mindedly and without reservations resulting from concepts of cultural pessimism. Darley even seems to have the support of art history as I remarked at the beginning of this essay and as Darley notes in his book⁴³: In a certain way the “aesthetics of the sensual”, the “culture of the depthless image” is reminiscent of the debate of formal aesthetics in the beginning of the 20th century, when the visual sign was considered self-valuable and allowed to present itself as such rather than supposed to represent meaning. Shall we consider *Enigma n^2* –and moreover those pieces of software-art which deliberately focus on “surface play and sensation”– a return to formal aesthetics? Is the autonomous self-centered technical effect –the code as a self-sufficient presentation on the screen– the contemporary equivalent of the *pure visua!*? Is, again, this aesthetic of the “surface play and sensation” appropriate to the character of our time and of this technology?

On the other hand, in an age of theme parks and progressing semi-analphabets, in an age of boundless media spectacles should one not, in such a world, stand up against the sell-out of meaning and fight for artifacts, which still demand to invest and practice hermeneutic energy? More over since the medium itself seems to foster such an attitude towards surface reading and seems to favor curiosity, which for example cares for what is promised behind every link rather than for what is to be discovered between the lines and signs. To what extent this assumption is true, how we as scholars are supposed to approach an aesthetic of “surface play and sensation,” and how we, under such circumstances, keep our pedagogical commitment to help improve reading competence, demands a thorough discussion. This discussion will have to answer not only question about aesthetics but about culture and societal values. It will after all be a discussion between the two souls I introduced at the beginning of this paper. It remains to be seen whether there is a way they can peacefully coexist in just one breast.

Notes

1. The connecting lines explain the conflict: “Unto the world in grossly loving zest, / With clinging tendrils one adheres; / The other rises forcibly in quest / Of rarefied ancestral spheres.” (Vers 1112-17, translation by Walter Kaufmann)
2. <http://www.yorku.ca/caitlin/waves/tell10.htm>

3. http://www.yorku.ca/caitlin/waves/stars_and_bicycles.htm
4. For an extensive discussion on "These Waves of Girls" see my review on dichtung-digital.org 4/2001 ([www.dichtung-digital.org/2001/06/20-Sim-
anowski](http://www.dichtung-digital.org/2001/06/20-Sim-
anowski))
5. Andrew Darley: *Visual Digital Culture. Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*. London und New York: Routledge 2000, 3.
6. Susan Sontag: *Against Interpretation* – [http://www.susansontag.com/against-
stinterpretationexcrpt.htm](http://www.susansontag.com/against-
stinterpretationexcrpt.htm).
7. Andrew Darley: *Visual Digital Culture. Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*. London und New York: Routledge 2000, 102.
8. See *Zang Tumb Tuuum* (first published in journals between 1912 and 1914).
9. See his cubistic calligrammes.
10. Franz Mon: *Zur Poesie der Flache*, in: Franz Mon: *Gesammelte Texte 1, Essays*, Janus Press 1994, 77-80. 'Prose of Space' would be Lewis Carroll's "The Tale of a Rat" which is presented in the shape of a rat tale.
11. Mon, Franz: *Zur Poesie der Flache*, in: Franz Mon: *Gesammelte Texte 1, Essays*, Janus Press 1994, 77-80: 80. For differentiation between concrete and visual poetry see Dencker, Klaus Peter: *Von der Konkreten zur Visuellen Poesie*, in: *Text & Kritik*, special issue *Visuelle Poesie IX/1997*, pp. 169-184: 174f. See Emmett Williams' stress on *poetry* rather than *concrete* and objection against de-emphasization of poetry by too strong analogies of concrete poetry to the visual arts. Emmett Williams: *Foreword to: An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, ed. by Emmett Williams, Something Else Press, New York, Villefranche, Frankfurt am Main 1967, V.
12. <http://auer.netzliteratur.net/worm/applepie.htm>
13. <http://home.ptd.net/~clkpoet/fineview/fineview.html>
14. See as example: *So is this* by Michael Snow from 1982.
15.] <http://www.zeitgenossen.com/outerspaceip/index1.html> go to top circle.
16.] For an extensive discussion on "These Waves of Girls" see my review on dichtung-digital.org 1/2002 ([www.dichtung-digital.org/2002/01-21-Sim-
anowski.htm](http://www.dichtung-digital.org/2002/01-21-Sim-
anowski.htm))
17. The examples discussed shall provide an idea of how concrete poetry develops in digital media. They are not meant to give an exhausting outline of all possible ways concrete poetry can go with or within digital media. A complete outline

would among others also have to discuss pieces such as Jim Andrews' *Arteroids*, a game to shoot up words (www.vispo.com/arteroids), Noah Wardrip-Fruin's three dimensional *Cave*-project *Screen*, that renders the loss of words from our memory by words literally peeling off the wall (see interview with Wardrip-Fruin on dichtung-digital.org/2/2004; www.dichtung-digital.org/2004/2-Wardrip-Fruin.htm) or Eduard Kac's digital holograms and maybe even his *Transgenetic* Artwork *Genesis* (www.ekac.org/geninfo.html). For further discussion of kinetic concrete poetry see Teemu Ikonen's essay *Moving text in avant-garde poetry. Towards a poetics of textual motion*, in: dichtung-digital.org/4/2003 (www.dichtung-digital.org/2003/4-ikonen.htm).

18. Nicolaus Einhorn: Zeigen was gezeigt wird, in: Text und Kritik Heft 25 (March 1978): Konkrete Poesie I, 1-4.
19. Gisela Dischner: Konkrete Kunst und Gesellschaft, in: Text und Kritik Heft 25 (March 1978): Konkrete Poesie I, 37-41: 38. Translation by Roberto Simanowski; original quote in German: "Durch die Isolation von Wörtern aus dem gewohnten 'Ablauf' der Sprache erscheint das Selbstverständliche der Sprachgewohnheit plötzlich neu, fragwürdig, unverständlich; die intendierten Sprachgewohnheiten werden aufgebrochen. Das ästhetische Nicht-Selbstverständlichnehmen des Selbstverständlichen könnte modellhaft sein für das gesellschaftliche Nicht-Selbstverständlichnehmen des Gewohnten, 'Normalen'."
20. Johanna Drucker: *The Visible Word. Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1994, 65.
21. Chris Bezzel speaks of an "aesthetical alienation from the social alienation" and states: "revolutionary writing means revolution of writing." ["ästhetische Entfremdung von der sozialen Entfremdung", "dichtung der revolution bedeutet revolution der dichtung."] (dichtung und revolution, in: Text und Kritik Heft 25 (March 1978): Konkrete Poesie I, 35-36: 35f.)
22. In his *Postscript to the Name of the Rose* Umberto Eco wonders whether *post-modern* is actually the modern name for mannerism.
23. Andrew Darley: *Visual Digital Culture. Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*. London und New York: Routledge 2000, 3.
24. Ibd, 102, 192, and 193.
25. Ibd, 169.
26. Matthew G. Kirschenbaum: *The Other End of Print: David Carson, Graphic Design, and the Aesthetics of Media* - <http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/kirsch.html>

27. Ulrich Schmitz: Schriftliche Texte in multimedialen Kontexten, in: *Sprachwandel durch Computer*, ed. by Rüdiger Weingarten. Opladen 1998, pp. 131-158.
28. Robert Coover: *Literary Hypertext. The Passing of the Golden Age*, in: Feedmag.com 2000 (online no longer available).
29. Lev Manovich: Flash Generation – http://www.manovich.net/DOCS/generation_flash.doc
30. Ibd.
31. Johanna Drucker, *The Visible Word. Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1994, 238.
32. See Manovich's note: "Many of the sites which inspired me to think of "Flash aesthetics" are not necessarily made with Flash; they use Shockwave, DHTML, Quicktime and other Web multimedia formats. Thus the qualities I describe below as specific to "Flash aesthetics" are not unique to Flash sites."
33. <http://www.theremediproject.com/projects/issue7/squidsoupuntitled/index.html>
34. This is the answer from Squid Soup in a private email asked for the intention of their piece. In the same email Squid Soup explains the production of meaningless text as follows: "1. take a random book off of a random shelf and open at a random page; 2. read a random passage; 3. repeat steps 1 and 2 a few times; 4. take recorded passages and cut them into small pieces (samples); 5. Change the speed and direction of some of the samples; 6. stick them back together in a different order."
35. <http://www.vispo.com/animisms/enigman/enigmanie.htm>. See the interview with Jim Andrews and the review of Enigman and other of his pieces in [dichtung-digital.org 1/2001](http://dichtung-digital.org/1/2001) <http://www.dichtung-digital.org/2002/01-29-Andrews.htm> and www.dichtung-digital.org/2002/01-10-Simanowski.htm.
36. <http://www.vispo.com/animisms/enigman2/index.htm>
37. Private email, November 12, 2002
38. Private email, November 9, 2002.
39. Andrews states in his email on November 12, 2002: "A kind of strange generative/interactive sound poetry/music. I have my stereo hooked up to my computer, so my computer speakers are my stereo's speakers. I play it sometimes (fairly loudly) for a few minutes to hear if I can figure out more about that sort of music."

40. Ludwig Giesz: Was ist Kitsch, in: Hermann Friedmann and Otto Mann (ed): Deutsche Literatur im Zwanzigsten Jahrhundert. Gestalten und Strukturen. Heidelberg: Rothe 1954, 405-418: 407. For the term of digital Kitsch see Roberto Simanowski: *Interfictions. Vom Schreiben im Netz*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 149.
41. Andrew Darley: Visual Digital Culture. Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres. London und New York: Routledge 2000, 6.
42. Andrew Darley: Visual Digital Culture. Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres. London und New York: Routledge 2000, 193.
43. Ibd. 114f.

****This is the modified version of an earlier article.*