

Assignment 3: Dynamic Concrete Poetry

Part 1) For the in-progress critique you must create an artwork consisting of a concrete poem composed along with one photographic image of an everyday object or scene. You can compose the text and image in any way that you like. It would likely be beneficial to use Adobe Flash to compose your project (because for the second final version you will need to animate the image).

Concrete poetry “is poetry in which the typographical arrangement of words is as important in conveying the intended effect as the conventional elements of the poem, such as meaning of words, rhythm, rhyme and so on.” The following is an example of concrete poetry by George Herbert:

My tender age in sorrow did beginne:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne
That I became
Most thinne.

With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victorie:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore:

With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

Figure 1: ‘Easter Wings’ by George Herbert

Your poem should not be very long, certainly not longer than the example above. You should be more experimental with typeface than the example above, however.

The following are two more examples of concrete poetry: [Watching Leaves](#) (author unknown)
Lies by [Tom Brinck](#)

The photographic image should be of an everyday object that is unremarkable by itself. Use your poetry to reflect a deeper meaning of the object. The layout, typeface, and relationship of the text to the image should all serve to convey the message of your poem.

Part 2) Animate your poem in such a way that the movement, changes of color, change of scale, etc. serve the same purpose that the typographic arrangement of the text did in part one. For example, if your poem spoke of the twisting form of shoelaces using a twisted pattern of words, use motion to convey the same concept. Do not only consider animating words, also consider animating the letterforms (a short poem will make this easier). Also, you do not need to be literal in your animation. For example, to animate the concrete poem 'Easter Wings' above it would be preferable to convey a sense of age and transcendence through motion rather than just making the "wings" flap. Subtlety is the key!

Assessment criteria:

Your grade will include consideration of the following criteria:

- 1) how clearly your chosen typeface(s), layout, and image relate to each other
- 2) how effective your first design is as a concrete poem (the visual layout)
- 3) how well you translate the visual layout of the poem into motion graphics
- 4) the degree of experimentation you engage in as you move from your initial idea to a final version (this should be documented on your website)

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