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abstract:

Essay accompanies the presenation of works by the feminist art collective Hilma's Ghost. The author explores the intersection of poetry and digital media in the adaptation of poems by Ariana Reines, Dorothea Lasky, CAConrad, and Lucía Hinojosa Gaxiola into videos. Mąkowska examines how poetry moves beyond the page—transitioning from linguistic materiality and concrete spatial arrangements to dynamic digital constellations that enact the experiences of time and memory. She argues that these "poems-turned-videos" do more than represent movement; they explore the "flows and frictions" between the material, spiritual, and supernatural. By migrating words into digital space, Hilma's Ghost highlights how poetry functions as a transformative force that can move the reader intellectually, emotionally, and politically.

Joanna Lilia Mąkowska - Assistant Professor of American Literature at the American Studies Center of the University of Warsaw, a translator, and literary critic. Her work has appeared in Modernism/modernity, Arizona Quarterly, Women's Studies, and James Baldwin Review, among others. She is currently working on a book that examines documentary poetics in relation to assemblage theory and protest literature. She translated into Polish Natalie Diaz's Postcolonial Love Poem, for which she was nominated for the Ossolineum Award, and Claudia Rankine's Citizen: An American Lyric. She was a Fulbright Scholar at the State University of New York at Buffalo and a Postdoctoral Fellow at Duquesne University. She also received grants and scholarships from the National Science Center and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

fading sound / pulsation / the ritual score

How can poetry move? Poetry's movement is intrinsic to its form. Visual and concrete poetry can set words in motion through spatial arrangements on the page. Sound poetry can move through vocalization and performance, driven by rhythm, breath, or noise. Some poems represent or enact forms of movement by engaging with linguistic materiality; others bring motion to a halt, crystallizing the image on the page. Another kind of movement happens off the page: think of the myriad ways in which a poem can move us – intellectually, emotionally, or politically. Poems by Ariana Reines, Dorothea Lasky, CAConrad, and Lucía Hinojosa Gaxiolae, featured in the current issue of *Widok*, move in yet another way. The feminist art collective, Hilma's Ghost, has transformed each poem into a video. Words migrate through digital space, forming dynamic constellations. While distinct in style, these poems-turned-videos all focus on the experience of time and the workings of memory. Like Hilma's Ghost's artwork, they also explore the flows and frictions between the material, spiritual, and supernatural.

The rose is the snake

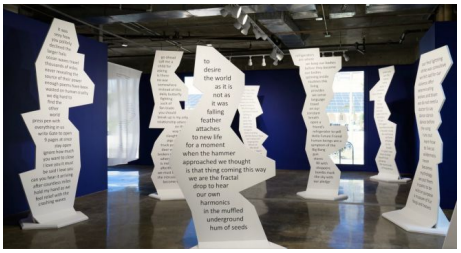
Dorothea Lasky's text is excerpted from the lyric essay Time, the Rose, and the Moon, part of her 2025 collection *Memory*, which serves as a tribute to Bernadette Mayer's multimedia work of the same title. Like Mayer's conceptual and "emotional science project," Lasky's work interrogates the poet's relationship to time and memory. Central to her exploration is Ouroboros, the ancient serpent devouring its own tail, which symbolizes the eternal cycle of destruction and recreation. The recurrent image of the snake she invokes illustrates the idea of time as non-linear, "bending and twisting back upon itself. Where the past is in the future. Or that the future exists in us now."

For their adaptation of Lasky's work, Hilma's Ghost selected

only one fragment: "The rose is the snake. There is a rose of nowhere and a snake of nowhere. But we won't ever touch them, in the same way we won't ever touch the sand of the moon." The visual organization of the text follows the logic of concrete poetry, where the text takes the shape of the object it represents. The video features moving, partially overlapping circles that resemble the Ouroboros, but function simultaneously as both the snake and the rose. Throughout thirty seconds, the lines gradually appear and unfold, multiplying and receding deeper into the space, becoming less visible, fuzzy, and illegible as they are dispersed through time. Interlacing the concepts of the rose as poetry and the snake as time, the video enacts the movement present in Lasky's work: a way of happening, where poems are transformed into events.

Each thread
added to the
loom was a
moment of the
weaver's life
end of the
world how
did you get
in my imagination

CAConrad's poem comes from their most recent collection, *First Light* (2024). CAConrad works at the intersection of literature and art, often exhibiting their poems as art objects. Some of their poems were turned into wooden sculptures whose shapes are determined by short, enjambed lines.

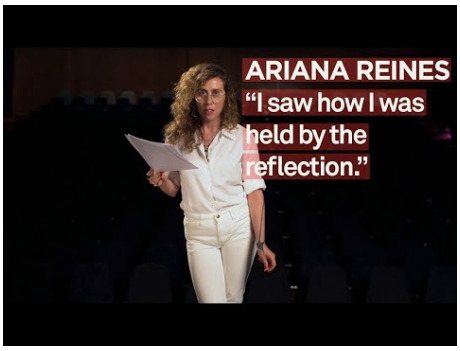


CAConrad: 500 Places at Once
, Museum of Contemporaty Art Tuscon, 13.09.2024–16.02.2025
Source

CAConrad also invented (Soma)tic Poetry Rituals. These are

meant to cultivate what the poet calls an "extreme present" – a state of immersion that anchors a person in the immediate moment. For CAConrad, these rituals serve as a reconstruction of their relationship with time developed in childhood. As they recount, their parents were factory workers who attempted to mentally escape the hardship and routine of labor by redirecting their attention away from the present moment. CAConrad internalized a similar coping mechanism. (Soma)tic Poetry Rituals helped them to gradually break this pattern by learning how to focus entirely on what is directly in front of them, turning the process of making art into a grounded experience of now. Their poem evokes how the fabric of a person's life is woven out of present and inevitably passing moments. The image of the loom bridges the material and the transcendental. It grounds the "thread of life" in the physical reality of manual labor while invoking the Greek Moirai, goddesses of fate who spin and sever destiny. Hilma's Ghost extends this image to the digital realm, where technology animates the movement of these threads. Like the enjambed lines on the page, the video's vertical and horizontal motion mimics the rapid operation of a loom, making the viewer experience the poem as a quickening passage through time.

An obscure future even now
Exceeding all predictions
As I write you



Ariana Reines: Reading from *A Sand Book*

Ariana Reines's poem "Tenth Body" comes from *A Sand Book* (2020). The collection uses "sand" – as both a physical substance and a word – to trace various examples of crisis and disaster, including the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School and Hurricane Sandy. Like the other poets grouped by Hilma's Ghost, Reines also brings into constellation the material and the metaphysical, focusing not only on flows and interconnections, but also frictions and tensions. She explores the body as immersed in capitalist power relations, while simultaneously seeking a connection with the mystical, or some sort of ineffable force. As she stated elsewhere, "Something is saying itself through me." For Reines, this is also a search for sustenance, a move against destructive forces, although the process is also fraught with pain. The video incorporates only the four final lines of the poem: "Like what shimmers at my base / An obscure future even now / Exceeding all predictions / As I write you." However, it disrupts chronology by presenting them in reverse order. The reader-viewer is thrown into the moment of writing, into "As I write you," which is the poem's ending. As the spatial distance between lines gradually expands, the reader-viewer witnesses an unfolding process of writing, which affects the sense of time.

Unseen diagrams are also dialogue

Two reviews of Lucia Hinojosa Gaxiola's bilingual collection The Telaraña Circuit (2023) caught my attention, as they both foreground movement. Mónica de la Torre calls the reader to "enter the book and synchronize your breath to the rhythms of its ongoing motion," whereas Carolina Ebeid notes that Gaxiola's poetry is "moving across the page like an animal trespassing / transmuting the tongue." Indeed, her work is nomadic, as it moves across languages, forms, media, and temporalities.

This movement is rooted in the exploration of archeology as a method of unearthing both the material and cultural memory. There is also a personal component to Gaxiola's exploratory poetics: she follows the story of her aunt, who worked as an archeologist. The book can be likened to an archeological site, with texts, archival materials, glyphs, and performance stills, among other things, that come together and act upon each other, forming a wide-ranging assemblage. Time, on the other hand, emerges as a palimpsest. Hilma's Ghost's video adaptation integrates the following fragment:

> *fading sound / pulsation / the ritual score*
>
> *unseen diagrams are also dialogues / staccatos / psychic archives*

The video highlights the structure of the palimpsest in the foreground, while background text spreads in different directions. Subsequent parts of the text become gradually illuminated, which creates a pulsating, shimmering motion. This allows the reader-viewer to imagine how an archive is moving.