

Between Image and Text: Experimental workshops with blackout poetry

The often antagonistic relationship of image and text has been a subject of debate for many thinkers. Researchers in different disciplinary frameworks have provided different responses to the matter, while many artists and creative practitioners insist on the self-explanatory nature of an image. In this series of workshops, we will approach the literature on image-texts relationships in a hands-on manner.

By using blackout poetry as a creative methodology – meaning the exclusion of words from an existing text rather than inclusion – participants will have the chance to consider the following questions: What are the implications and the complications of blacking out parts of a written text? Can this process permit a closer engagement with the text? And how can we rethink the image-text relationship by applying this methodology?

At the same time these experimental workshops will offer the opportunity to re-think the challenges arising from the notion of the “quotation” – the process of extracting something from its initial context. According to Walter Benjamin, “[o]ne can go even further and remember that interruption is one of the fundamental devices of all structuring. It goes far beyond the sphere of art. To give only one example, it is the basis of quotation. To quote a text involves the interruption of its context.” (New York: Schocken Books, 2007: 151).

In preparation, participants will receive scanned copies of some short texts, which will be used during the session as the basis for creating blackout poems. Participants will require access to PowerPoint.

Organisers: Dr Kyveli Lignou-Tsamantani, Humanities Research Centre Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of York, and Dr Elena Anastasaki, Assistant Professor, Department of Language and Intercultural Studies, University of Thessaly. The workshops are held by the Humanities Research Centre, University of York (UK) and the Cultural Relations and Comparative Arts Lab, University of Thessaly (GR).

Follow us on Instagram to read the outcomes from each workshop: @f.p.e.w_ (**Found Poetry Experimental Workshops**)

Third meeting: On Valéry

When: Tuesday 23 May 2023, 17.30-19.00 BST

Where: Online (via zoom)

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/emQkr1dR8bbgnvQyZ>

Preparatory texts:

- Paul Valéry, “The Centenary of Photography”, in *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg, notes by Amy Weinstein Meyers (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 191-198.
- Paul Valéry, “The Angel”, in *The Idea of Perfection: The Poetry and Prose of Paul Valéry*, Kindle Edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), 329-335.

Previous Workshops:

First meeting: On Barthes

When: Monday 13 February 2023, 17.30-19.00 GMT

Where: Online (via zoom)

Preparatory texts:

- Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image”, in *Image, Music, Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 32-51.
- Roland Barthes, “Soap-powders and Detergents”, in *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 2000), 36-38.
- Catherine Taylor, “The Photographic Image”, in *Image, Text, Music* (London: SPBH Essays No. 3, 2022), 51-53.

Second meeting: On Sontag*

When: Monday 13 March 2023, 17.30-19.00 GMT

Where: Online (via zoom)

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/6uNGvbbR9PTS2WVR7>

Preparatory texts:

- Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 66-84.
- Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2010), 63-100 (Chapter 2) [NB – focus on pp. 63-74]
- David Levi Strauss, *Words Not Spent Today Buy Smaller Images Tomorrow: Essays on the Present and Future of Photography* (New York: Aperture, 2014), 84-85 (“On Susan Sontag”)

***Content note:** The texts for this session examine issues around the representation of violence.