

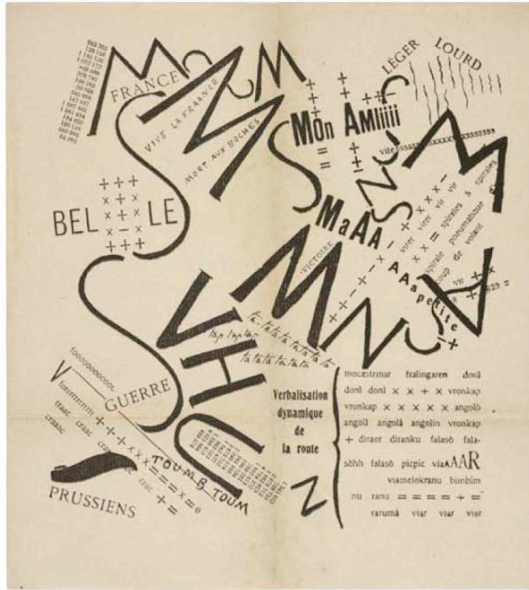
“Allen Ruppertsberg Curates.” *Artforum* (March 2007), p. 288-97.



Advertisement from *Artforum* (January 1967). Ed Ruscha says goodbye to college joys.

Title

ALLEN RUPERSBERG CURATES



Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Après la Marne, Joffre visita le front en auto (After the Marne, Joffre Visited the Front by Car)*, 1919, ink on paper, 10 1/4 x 9 1/2". © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome.

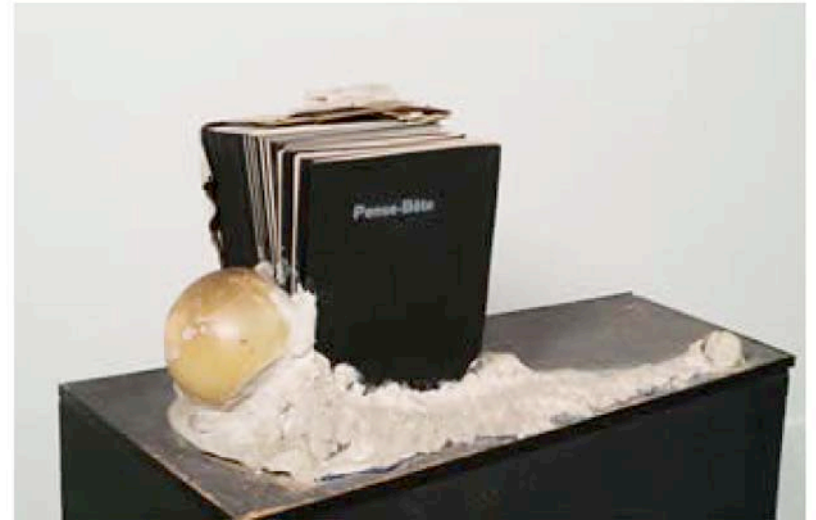
First Thought Best Thought
Allen Ginsberg

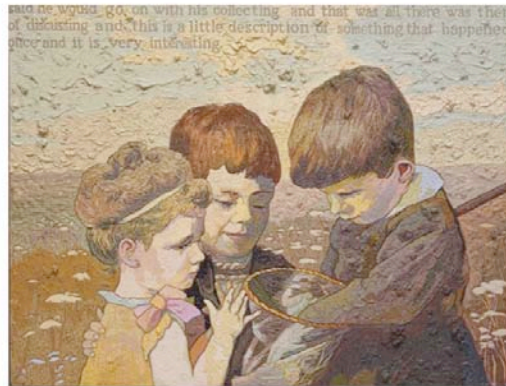
Not so long ago during a class discussion where I was apparently using the word poetic quite liberally, a student raised his hand. "I don't know what this word poetic means" he said. I paused as I was caught up short by the question. I had always taken for granted that most everyone, particularly in a class of university art students, would know the meaning of this commonly used word.



The Letter Eager in Black Pines, 1968.

Marcel Broodthaers, *Pense-Bête*, 1963, books, paper, plaster, plastic spheres, and wood, 38 9/16 x 33 1/16 x 16 15/16".





Jess, Will Wunder Never Cease: Translation No. 21, 1968, oil on canvas mounted on wood panel, 21 x 28 1/8".

But, as I quickly thought about it, I realized that maybe it was going to be much more difficult to explain what I meant by the use of this fine word than I would have imagined only a second ago. "Well", I ventured, "it means that something is like poetry." Silence. "You know, if something feels like poetry then it probably is." Silence.



Jef Geys. Title tk, date tk, media tk, dims tk.

"You all know the Belgium artist Marcel Broodthaers, right?" Knowing not to linger I marched right on. "When he decided to give up the job of poet and become an artist, so that as he famously stated in the announcement for the show, he could sell something and succeed in life (by inventing something "insincere" as he also famously put it), the first work he made involved partially covering some volumes of his last book of poetry in plaster and placing them on a sculpture stand. He discovered that no one was curious to read the books when viewing the sculpture."



Lucy and her visitors. Organized by the orchestra's common doorman comed et, quattro doigtat, will doore door qvo



William Hamilton Finlay, *Inscribed Stone*, 1987, Furka Pass, Switzerland. Photo: Werner Hannappel.



Joe Brainard in collaboration with Frank O'Hara, *Red Rydler and Dog*, ca. 1964, ink on paper, 60ms tk. From "C Comics 1" (Lorenz Guide, 1964).

I continued on. "Maybe the artist has the sensibility of a poet. It's the feeling you have when you look at a work of art that maybe it pertains as much to poetry, small p, as it does to the world of visual art." More silence. I was getting in deeper. "You have all heard of so-called poetic license, right? Well, can't the artist also be a poet? change horses in mid-stream? He can change the rules, rearrange the form or logic or context within the elements of the piece in order to have a completely different effect on the viewer. Maybe he is trying to lead you astray, to a different world of sense and meaning."



Dieter Roth, *Bok 3b*, 1974, ink on paper, 23 x 17 x 3 cm.

"How?" was the response. "Well," I said again, "if I were to think like an art critic I would approach the work through the language of art and if I were to try and express a similar idea speaking about language as art (or literary criticism) I would be talking about the laws of poetry." Oh, no, I sighed to myself. The laws of poetry? What is wrong with you?



Wallace Berman, *Untitled*, 1967, offset poster, 26 x 23".



William Leavitt, *Elliptical Bed*, 1982, pastel on paper, 30 x 44".

After a moment I started again. "You know, if you poetize something it becomes poetic." Back to square one. Then. "One of the elements of traditional poetry that we initially respond to is the verse forms of the words, the rhyming of the syllables or the various sounds we hear, versification in other words. In visual arts maybe we respond to the correspondences or connections found within the work itself. Reflexivity. Where one thing mirrors another." Now I was getting somewhere.



Left to right, Lawrence Weiner, *Many colored objects placed side by side to form a row of many colored objects, date tk, enamel on brick*, Installation view, Ghent, Belgium. Lawrence Weiner, *Many colored objects placed side by side to form a row of many colored objects, date tk*, book cover.



Above, Allan Kaprow, *The Happenings Calendar* tk, 1977, media tk, dims tk. Below, Allan Kaprow, *LP Record* tk, 1977, record, recto and verso tk, dims tk.

Can photography be poetic was the last thing I heard.