

What  
the Hell  
is  
Asemic  
Writing

An attempt to express what words can't  
An attempt to can what words express.  
unreadable mystery.

what is asemic eye-candy? a kind of writing? how about conceptual asemia, or asemic conceptualism? also kinds of writing? maybe asemic writing is a kind of drawing. or maybe it's only any kind of writing any one of us is unable to read at any given moment. a provisional, or ad hoc, asemia? ephemeral asemia. writing as chameleon. camouflaged writing. maybe only a new edition of The Book of Lies, translated into crazy grass calligraphy. or the Proverbs of Hell, read aloud, recorded, played backwards and transcribed, in which case clearly the Voice of Satan (or at least a choir of Enochian Angels). the Voice of The Mushroom, disguising itself as eye-candy, said? maybe just the old Trickster/Fool, writing with his toes as he dances in the desert.

I like what you are saying but the term "eye-candy" bothers me. It seems somehow sarcastic. Why can't it just be asemic art or asemic visuals?

eye-candy, yes, but dont forget wallpaper

Eye-candy, not and do forget wallpaper

i have no problem at all with anything that calls itself asemic art. i just don't see why i should consider it a kind of writing.

OK I get that, Jim. In fact, I do prefer the term asemic art to asemic writing myself that sounds right, jim. where did the writing part start. asemic seems to be the updated response to the cloning of gysin. tim gaze captured the writing in his journal, but also had to deal with shifts toward drawing. this shift can complicate, but really it collapses under the pressure of free-for-all. this is very mail-art minded, the politics of such - sans arbiter. not that im promoting it.

I think Tim prefers the term "asemic writing"--since unreadable is such a crucial part of the definition.

that connection makes sense

I think his view is not necessary. If someone asks me what asemic art is I say that it is art that seems to depict unreadable writing or examples of some indecipherable symbolic system.

Spencer, do you really define asemic Art as a kind of writing? that seems entirely unnecessary.

Oh boy, well, I guess I'm somewhere between Gaze and you. He seems too extreme in one direction and you seem too extreme in the other. A lot of asemic work DOES SEEM TO DEPICT UNREADABLE WRITING. That is just a fact. But the second part of my definition is just as important, at least to me.

i am actually more of an extremist than Tim where this is concerned. i want asemic writing to be a kind of writing, and if something is not a kind of writing then i want it to stop calling itself writing. i do find it baffling that this is considered an extreme position.

funny, i guess i dont see a use for the term asemic art. open, non-semantic, meaningless art. that exists already, but perhaps a digital version is being currently conjured. is it that there's a desire to rename things. duchampian things. your work spencer now includes a swerve of the post asemic. and jim, youve been post lots of things for a while.

i feel the same way, Nico. the word art doesn't need the word asemic, it doesn't add anything to the discussion. with writing, however, the situation is very different.

Jim, I just meant that in terms of definition I seem between two poles whose outsides may be defined by Gaze and you.

Nico - a couple of years ago the free improv sax player Jack Wright told me i was post-Jim Leftwich. i'm still trying to decide what i think about that.

The word art DOES need the word asemic (just as these discussions are helpful) If you saw all the work posted at asemic group, all the work that probably isn't asemic, maybe you wouldn't feel that way, [Jim](#)

that's pretty spot-on there, jim.

Spencer - i actually don't see Tim and i as being very far apart.

work posted at the asemic Writing group, Spencer? why isn't there an asemic Art group?

Ask [Michael Jacobson](#)

My point is that every day there is work there, often that a lot of group members like, that I

don't consider asemic. That is actually why I posted a borderline piece yesterday headed by the question "Who Thinks This Is Not Asemic?"

i was about to ask [Michael Jacobson](#) about his take on the distinction between asemic art and asemic writing. my sense of the history of the word in its current context is that [Michael](#) has been willing to include a very wide range of mark-making activities under the heading of Writing.

yes, Spencer, that's why i am responding to Nico's question today - because i am interested in how the term "asemic writing" is defined. i obviously have my opinion, but i am willing to do what i am doing right now because i know my opinion is not the only one.

Yes, that's right. But even the term "mark-making" can be ambiguous. Do these marks have to be from some intentional source, intentionally made as symbolic marks? I kinda think if you stretch the definition that far the answer should be yes. Because otherwise you get almost anything abstract with lines or shapes, or photos taken of some scene that has lines, cracks almost anything.

what are we talking about now. something in the discussion is veering into asemia. spencer, i think adding the term art is important to you and your work these past few years. you identify with it and if you think it needs protecting - no problem there. the nano landscape doesn't preclude asemic art, it probably invites it. because i get all my "white" asemics from gysin and concrete/vispo background, i remain with the idea of non-writing writing as my asemic landmark.

i have made attempts at encyclopedic definitions of poetry, under the general heading of "pansemia" where just about everything is proposed as a kind of potential poetry, a kind of writing, ultimately readable in one way or another. photographs of cracks in the sidewalk, tree-bark rubbings, etc & etc. the thinking here is about reading, every kind of reading i explain it using a shag rug. i say, it's a score needing your enthusiasm.

Nico, i've been trying to respond to this, while also keeping up with the ongoing comments:

"where did the writing part start. asemic seems to be the updated response to the cloning of gysin. tim gaze captured the writing in his journal, but also had to deal with shifts toward drawing. this shift can complicate, but really it collapses under the pressure of free-for-all. this is very mail-art minded, the politics of such - sans arbiter. not that im promoting it."

Nico - there was a time, maybe 5 years, late 90s to early 00s, when circulating and advocating the word "asemic" was important. no one else was using it the way Tim Gaze and i were using it in the late 90s. we wanted to make folks aware of the word, and of how it was being used. we started circulating it in the small press experimental poetry network, and that intersected and overlapped with the mail art network, particularly once i stopped publishing the magazine Juxta, and started Xtant.

i have always thought of asemia as a kind of writing, specifically a kind of poetry, a variety of visual poetry. my first encounter with the word was in a response to a textual poem, not even a visual poem. it was suggested that if i continued to destabilize and disintegrate language i would eventually produce an asemic text. asemic writing was the starting point for me - or to be more precise, writing was the starting point. i would not have been interested in pursuing the idea of the asemic if it had not been attached to the word "writing."

once the word "asemic" had gotten into circulation (by the early to mid 00s), it became a question of what it should be applied to. was everything made writing, a kind of writing, simply by adding the word asemic? as if to say, if something is not writing, it can be thought of as asemic writing. in that case, anything that can't be read can be called asemic writing. that can't be what anyone wants.

it seemed to me then (and now) that the question of what is and what is not readable can be (and probably should be) asked everywhere, all the time, and we will find that almost all of our experience is readable to one degree or another (that line of thinking led me to the notion of pansemia). but none of that implies that everything we experience is a kind of writing.

so, it became important, at least for me, to de-emphasize the word "asemic" and to

focus on the word "writing". that, in my opinion, is the context in which the asemic should be considered now. when we are talking about a certain kind of writing, we should use the term asemic writing. when we are talking about other varieties of the asemic, it only confuses things if we insist on using the word writing.

Well of course everything is potential poetry or art. But then the question becomes focused on what it means to activate that potential. What I personally really dislike is this idea that art or poetry is that JUST because the artist or poet say so. That seems an insult to the entire heritage and history of art. Why then make art or poetry at all? Just strap on a camera, get google glasses and everything you perceive is yr art, no art-making necessary

exactly, Spencer, the only reason for proposing such a thing is to provoke the inevitable range of responses, which are infinitely more interesting than the proposal itself.

I submit that it is indeed 'writing', purely by one simple definition:

"a sequence of letters, words, or symbols marked on paper or some other surface"

[oxforddictionaries.com](http://oxforddictionaries.com)

! Lots of stuff at asemic group would not pass that test

! that's what i was thinking, too, spencer

! Can we simplify further? Let's take the word 'symbols':

The definitions for 'symbols' include 'a shape', 'a sign' even 'a thing'.

That's pretty broad.

are we still "on paper or some other surface"

or are we finding ourselves immersed in the ubiquity of "writing"

I don't know if this is at all useful, but I often mention my interest in the time, as a child, between drawing letters and writing letters. The drawing has an asemic iteration factor to it. The writing is a move toward complete compliance. For me, it's the letter itself that holds the key. Pansemic seems an overview term of all expressive documenting - seems right.

i think it's the letter too. i've been looking back at the first couple of issues of asemic magazine, and almost everything seems literal. variations on the theme of the letter, or improvisations on the shapes of the letters. i think that's how we get to the asemic from the poem, by way of the syllable to the letter.

It had better NOT be useful, [Nico Vassilakis](#). My first comment here. Thanks for letting me join. I feel so ..... blissfully useless! It's very freeing, which is, darn it, useful, I hope.

For me the letter is no more important than the line (and within the line perhaps words or wordlike sections), and that extending to multiple rows of lines. Letters or symbol formations may or may not be visible within these lines. What's interesting to me is that this issue of the primacy of the letter goes back to vispo poetics. Many visual poets have believed it all about the letter. I was never one of them. My vispo focus was generally either on level of words or blocks of text. This worked for me, I believe, because I often combined writing with nonverbal visuals. The concept of vispo I conceived, after being introduced to vispo and schooled by Crag Hill in mid 80s, was mixing words with visuals.

i'm okay with different strokes., Spencer.

i've been a big fan of your visual poems for a long time, Spencer, going back at least as far as Malleable Cast, even though i tend to think of the letter as the primary unit of composition in much if not most of my own work.

Ditto for me with both you guys. Another poet important in my vispo and asemic development has been JMB.

JMB, yes - enormously important to me.

In many ways, we wouldn't be without JMB.

plus breakfast lunch and dinner

i've always had to think of the asemic term itself as a kind of cathartic ironic avatar for what is

both right and wrong with avant-garde writing in its post-institutional setting.. in one sense, asemicism is a kind of impossibility, it's like saying that since we can't see the air molecules we breathe, they don't exist, or even more, that we accept that they exist but prefer "still" to call the air fluid 'emptiness'.. and so, what we get in asemicism is another example of indexicality funkng the bed so to speak.. from the outset it should have been called something like "promiscuous graphology" because graphology alone seems to behave as a term precisely the way the intended indexical lineage behaves for 'asemic writing'.. 'asemicism' seen in an institutional light might mean 'it doesn't signify' ie it doesn't work, or it doesn't get grants, or it isn't taken seriously mostly etc.. and so the whole oddity of the term is there from the beginning and Jim noted all of the inconsistencies as i recall way back then.. and strangely enough, the conceptual writing idea to my mind smacked of a similar semantic deficiency, because, well because of people like Gysin and Michaux and the concrete poets as well who were pushing writing into abstract graphologies and allowing the formation of 'subjective syntaxes' to perform as content.. All writing elicits some conceptuality. Writing in situ is more or less the production of and by a cognitive event of some kind.. so asemicism is an ironic nonce, an extra-institutional outsider art, and conceptual writing, is a pleonasm to hide an intra-institutional conspiracy, and flarf was the 'funked bed' calling all graphology more or less 'a funkbed'.. the main problem anymore, is the fact that politicality, and not in the sense of 'what is beautiful' has also become a kind of surface tension over the funkbed of the truth about life.. Life is a non-value added step from the point of view of the material universe.. Our being is always being-in, being-for, etc.. that fundamental fascism renders all polity an instrumentalized ornamentality.. we ourselves are a floating signifier, and depending on how we cast our aesthetic valuation machines, will always remain in the throes of some debate.. Until culture self-identifies itself as a post-rational ritual surrounding the site of being, there will only be more endless semantic games which all describe the spherology of the worlding impulse..

Always smart, Lanny. I think 'ironic nonce' is appropriate. I'd also venture into the idea of anything asemic has exceeded its reach. As they say, perhaps its time is over.

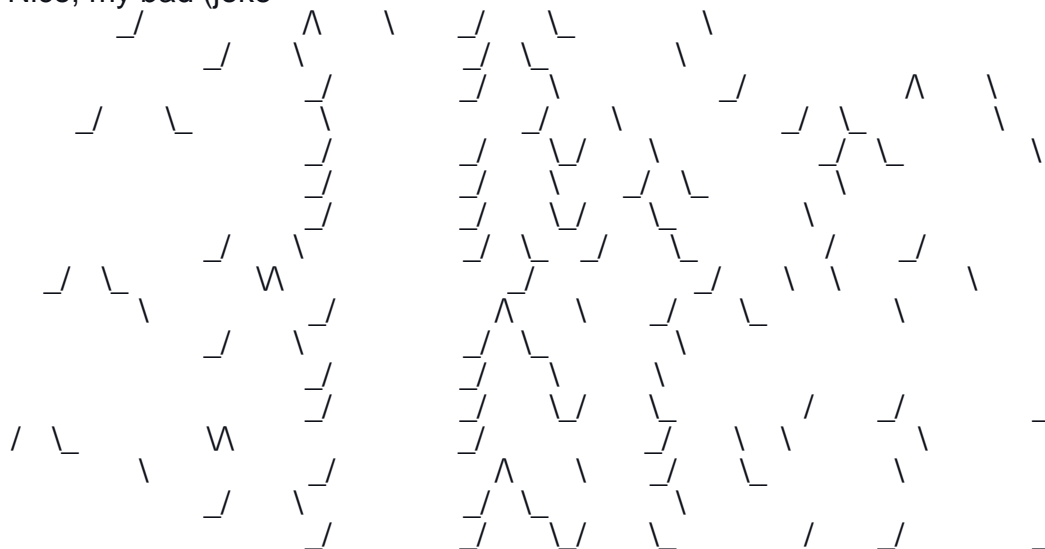
It's time is over? Does that mean we get a glossy anthology titled THE LAST ASEMIC?

Yes, Lanny but the material universe is only 3% of the universe, according to current science.

For me art (and not just art) is about the invisible (or about building bridges between the visible and the invisible. This makes sense because so much of life is invisible to us (in many ways, not just according to current science.

Spencer, I'm never quite sure why you need to be snarky. I believe i said, the idea of and perhaps. What is it about The Last Vispo that brings out the snark.

sea fairy / murphy's slaw  
Sorry, Nico, my bad (joke



/ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \

aka vispo

Dunno and won't say. Er, sorry. That's why, not what.

hat which is asemic by syntactical manner

Nico,

happens that American anthropologists (around 2000) argue that our behavior is a permanent performative ...we live performance ...also, happens that people have a "personal language" that each of us possesses that has nothing to do with language verbal ... So, then, it is possible to write ASEMICS with that "personal language" meaning only knows who writes ... the same happened in late 1960 when "asemántics poems" appear to protest the domain which the State exercises over the population through verbal language but this is not the case ...

Nico,

ocurre que los antropólogos norteamericanos (alrededor del 2000) sostienen que nuestro comportamiento es performático...vivimos una performance permanente...lo mismo ocurre con el "lenguaje personal" que cada uno de nosotros posee que no tiene nada que ver con el lenguaje verbal...Así, entonces, es posible hacer poemas (ASEMICS) con ese "lenguaje personal" cuyo significado sólo sabe quien lo escribe...lo mismo ocurrió a fines de 1960 cuando aparecen los "poemas asemánticos" para protestar por el dominio que el Estado ejerce sobre la población a través del lenguaje verbal pero éste no es el caso...[See Translation](#)

Good to hear response from you, Clemente.

In earlier exchange (which I believe inspired this post) Nico mentioned "begging the question" I wonder if an asemic answer is begging the question. What do you think, Nico?

[Clemente Padin](#), I like that you mention the State having control of language. But then you say, this is not the case... I think our shared language is a form of compliance through childhood's proper writing techniques and this asemic expression is a mo...[See More](#)

Giorgio Agamben wrote a great book about this, called INFANCY AND HISTORY

Spencer, "begging the question" regarding an edge has to do with Michael's comment about your piece - "It's on the edge! I see lines in it which hint at writing." The blur between asemic writing and asemic art and where, if any boundary or edge is there, and what is on the other side. But we've discussed this in other places and am content with your viewpoint. [D](#)

I understand that, Nico. I only mentioned the other thread because you used the phrase. It seems to me that answering yr question above with an asemic is a stronger instance of begging the question and I was wondering what yr feelings are about that.

Ah, you meant literally answer with an asemic piece. Oh yes, I misunderstood. I am all for that. I've said many times a review of poems should be a poem. So, to extend that to anything is a show of respect for a work/s. You've noticed, I have reposted in comments parts of peoples asemics that I like very much. I think it a swell means to engage with a piece instead of simply liking

Begin with "what the hell is writing?"

crow's feet.

all feet are connected to a larger body...

Great !!!!!!!!!

it is what it isnt.or it is the isnt it once was wasnt it



HAVE A NARRATIVE...IT IS ASEHETIC...AN ARTISTIC MEDIUM...THINK OF IT IN TERMS OF ARTISTIC LINE EXPRESSION.

Asemic writing has no semantic content. The letters are illegible, invented, or primal. The text has no verbal sense. Through its formatting and structure, it may suggest a type of document, or coded diagram, thereby, hint at meaning. Asemic writing can be understood through aesthetic intuition... through gut feeling.

Cecil, I agree with your description of asemic writing to a point. When you expand it to all abstract painting, I think it goes too far. It is not just "asemic" but also "writing". If the distinction is not important to an artist, there are already many fora for abstract painting they can participate in. Not that I would advocate restricting access in any way...but erasing the distinction would make it meaningless...yes, I see the irony in that! But I was so happy when I found there was a little community of people doing what I thought I had invented...negate the boundaries and there goes that.

I pulled that off the internet somewhere ... if its yours please tell me and I can credit you... !

Viva Asemic !!!!! :)))

[http://paulhertz.net/saic/artware/code/unimundo\\_02.html](http://paulhertz.net/saic/artware/code/unimundo_02.html) **Unimundo**

Thx, [Joanna](#)! I was using abstract painting as a form of expression which parallels what I believe asemic writing aims to do. True, the writing is seen here but as you and I well know, the very word writing is engrained in our genes to convey what each other have to say.. it's part and parcel of our means of communication, that and voice, of course.

It seems to me when we tag asemics with that highly interpretive word, writing, it begs to write without "semantic content" which is...??? Think of the world's written language and the tremendous diversity of the written word. Calligraphy within the Orient is well known when we see it, but other than those who grow up using it, it is an art rather than a word(s) in our minds. Cyrillic writing to be is not only unique but confusing for my western mind... it could be "asemic writing" as far as I could understand.

The very use of the word "aseemics" is relatively new, i.e. the word search or spell check doesn't recognize it. Asemic anything is an evolving art. Yes, it is an art. And to describe art takes time to talk about it, discuss it, debate it, test it.. all in the time honored way other "schools of art" developed. Did Kandinsky's art have a word sitting around in art scholars minds looking for examples..? And so it goes in the vast world of art (emotive expression?).

Thank you for the discussion, Joanna... I enjoyed it.

I observe my son cannot decipher his grandmother's tiny neat Palmer script.

This amounts to the same thing. As a calligrapher studying texts in a foreign language one finds the line speaks more than the unknown words. As in your example of Cyrillic. I have a friend who invented an alphabet of code forms so that her lettering (on porcelain) would provide pattern without the distraction of semantic content, although that secret text is known to her. Words are overbearing; I find it nearly impossible to look at a text in a language I know and see the visual qualities rather than just reading the words (again) and frequently resort to turning the page upside down or viewing from a distance to see how it looks rather than how it reads

Hgd tv gufdck gevs ouytf rd gfdtg huh f as

I'm guessing it has something to do with canceling out the typical processes of





"speaks" to the viewer... use any example, man-made or natural, if the object is 'eye candy' to that viewer, let's call it 'asemic'.

Writing answers the mark, the pen is the roll, meaning is a light like a gleam, a gleam is a turn of the head that follows the gleam on a cup in a light of a room, of an afternoon. The scroll of anxiety, a room with light where voices. Speaking is occurring in the midst of light but it's hard to hear beyond the light. There it's drinking and voices and light and it doesn't mean what you think because you can't hear because of the light.

::) he 've ++++++,,,,Di|||©\*\*\*\*\*

"John rode to town on the horse." That is a sentence with semantic content that anyone who is literate in English can easily understand.

"On town to John horse the rode" is not understandable, but still obviously English and we recognize individual words.

"Oo wjrn se het doeh no taw" We can recognize Letters but there is no semantic content at all. It is now asemic.

" . " Now we have removed the familiar Latin alphabet. To the English speaker this is just a stream of symbols that are completely unfamiliar effectively asemic. Facebook won't let me use a completely made up alphabet this is a random line of Tamil letters, but you get the idea.

Ask [Spencer Selby](#). He's the godfather around here. For what it's worth: anything that doesn't strive to make sense.

For me, whether Asemic, abstract or visual poetry, the link that embraces them is Post literate. They all deal with form and presence, no-thing..there is no inherent meaning and each viewer creates their own narrative.

Thanks, Ed. I don't think I'm considered an authority, maybe just an opinionated big mouth. My short answer was posted over at Useless Writing, where Nico reposted this question. It was "unreadable mystery. But then that response turned into a new discussion.

Another definition for Zaum was "beyond significance". Again I think that works nicely for asemic writing.

? ? ? ? ? when people ask what I'm writing, I say it is an imaginary language. It truly could mean something specific, but it doesn't.

No matter what we choose to post, I think we're all in good company. Nobody knows nothing and very little something. Apparently we "like" that a lot.

I like [Paul Zmolek's](#) 'beyond significance'.

more info: <http://asemic.net/ASEMIC> Asemic writing has been made by poets, writers, painters, calligraphers, children, and scribblers, all...  
ASEMIC.NET

It is visual communication with any intentional meaning stripped away. I'd erase "stripped away" and add 'out' to "with" and finalize it with a "." after "meaning"... notice I began this with "I'd"...

...and render it all in Glagolitic letters just for good measure.

<http://www.facebook.com/RealRohrschachRohrschach>  
Fictional Character

**Like Page** 433 Likes 1 talking about this

For me, this is pertinent.... "As to the roaming of sages,  
They move in utter emptiness,  
Let their minds meander in the great nothingness;  
They run beyond convention  
And go through where there is no gateway.  
They listen to the soundless

And look at the formless,  
They are not constrained by society  
And not bound to its customs.  
- Lao-tzu”

Lao Tzu

Either stripped away, or never was there in the first place. ; - ) perhaps it is "quantum meaning" - it could be anything until each observer decides what it is!

i'd have to check out "Old Church Slavic" for something a wee bit different, [Seth](#)... but Glagolitic is still in contention.

I like the 'stripped away' because when working 'asemicly' I have to avoid creating something my pattern making brain tries to impose meaning on. So, for me the meaning was there, but I deliberately removed it. (I do a lot of recycling of appropriated imagery and text...)

Lao Tzu was no fool. Thx for that Johnny...

Mr. Mac, I read that and understood it, but wonder if there's anything in the multi-verse that's actually soundless or formless.

it's silly but i've done it

[Nico](#)... Lao Tzu had experienced that by going within beyond all matter which makes sound and beyond form into that which cannot be spoken.

ah see mic (do you?)

"Undoubtedly but that is show, Shaun replied, the muttermelk of his blood donor beginning to work, and while innocent of disseminating the foul emanation, it would be a fall day I could not, sole, so you can keep your space and by the power of blurry wards I am loyable to do it (I am convicted of it !) any time ever I liked (bet ye fippence off me boot allowance!) with the allergrossest transfusiasm as, you see, while I can soroquise the Siamanish better than most, it is an openear secret, be it said, how I am extremely ingenuous at the clerking even with my badly left and, arrah go braz, I'd pinsel it with immenuensoes as easy as I'd perorate a chickerow of beans for the price of two maricles and my trifolium librotto, the authordux Book of Lief, would, if given to daylight, (I hold a most incredible faith about it) far exceed what that bogus bolshy of a shame, my soamheis brother, Gaoy Fecks, is conversant with in audible black and prink. Outragedy of poetscaids! Acomedy of letters! I have them all, tame, deep and harried, in my mine's I. And one of these fine days, man dear, when the mood is on me, that I may willhap cut my throat with my tongue tonight but I will be ormuzd moved to take potlood and introvent it Paatryk just like a work of merit, mark my words and append to my mark twang, that will open your pucktricker's ops for you, broather brooher, only for, as a papst and an immature and a nayophight and a spaciaman spaciosum and a hundred and eleven other things, I would never for anything take so much trouble of such doing. And why so? Because I am altogether a chap too fly and hairyman for to infradig the like of that ultravirulence. And by all I hold sacred on earth clouds and in heaven I swear to you on my piop and oath by the awe of Shaun (and that's a howl of a name!) that I will commission to the flames any incendiarist whosoever or ahriman howsoclever who would endeavour to set ever annyma roner moother of mine on fire. Rock me julie but I will soho!"as always...best wishes..asemically speaking of course

?  
?  
? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ?

For me he points to a space of being, where all forms reside before being given shape to. The place we actually exist not the story of our lives lol

and the source (perhaps) from where all emanates (the grand ultimate as tai ji is called--that is, the space between two outstretched arms)

I can't help but do it but everytime I try to follow some kind of form or what would you call it or template. "forget about it!" My experience is every artist has their own style your own dance their own music which is the most thrilling part of all! ASEMIC art allows me to forget about myself and to just go play with colors and effects and photographs I have and pieces of this and that and the other thing it's a beautiful thing I know it's done when I know it's done and not before and the audience that might see it can interpret it anyway they wish it's a beautiful form of art. Honestly once you learn how to run one of the gazillions of photo editing programs that are out there you can have any effect you want you can switch from one to the other together to the other to the other to be other whatever all I know is when you're done you're done and you know it and it's much more like giving it up and letting the spirit moves through you. Once you see it you will know time to post and save for later additions hahahaha. Just have fun playing with colors and forms and this amazing technology and and you will reach that aha moment quicker than any other method I have tried. I'm totally in love with the process and it's all about process in art or in life we must enjoy what we're doing.! I almost think it's our responsibility to let go and let..... xx

.... Thank you so much for your post that gives me a lot of ideas! And on I go happy happy happy. Or sad sad sad they're pretty much the same to me. that which looks like writing but has no linguistic meaning.

|.||.\./..\|..|\../\|.|||../.

Truth is sometimes I'm afraid when I make up a symbol or some such and I make them up. That they really mean something I don't know. That scares me

i wrote this in another group under the same post - I don't know if this is at all useful, but I often mention my interest in the time, as a child, between drawing letters and writing letters. The drawing has an asemic iteration factor to it. The writing is a move toward complete compliance. For me, it's the letter itself that holds the key.

Very interesting Nico.

That is an ancient fear. There are so many stories and legends about hubris inspired wizards who use secret symbols to let an unknown evil into the world.

Thank you for that [Nico Vassilakis](#)... I really did need to hear it I think I have pretty good protection on to keep the evil out. But I need to get out of me what I considered evil so its no longer has power over me you know?

doodles from the ether

As in Naming something gives it power?

Jeez Louise!!! Hey was just expressing my perspective not the truth just a perspective.

It evokes meaning vs. simply giving meaning.

Subversion of writing

It evokes whatever your mind says to you about it. There is no inherent meaning. soul writing. soul transmission. in the inbetween. the inspeakable. the silenced. the un-reherased. the undescrible. where words fail. the future, past present of language. the part of me still communicating to my ancestors and to future generations.

That's a photo of a tree [John Barlow](#).....

tree scribblings in the air

Its the only key to a unique box holding perfect secrets...

Expression of personality in uknown and unfamiliar-abstract way.

Translating what the elements are saying to us  
marks that participate in some of the characteristics of writing systems and  
some of the characteristics of drawing systems without being quite one  
nor the other . gesturing towards either or both systems whilst always  
tugging towards the other it most seems not to be . gesturing towards  
reading and capable of being 'read' but refusing to condition the  
meanings produced according to one system or the other in exclusivity .  
hence radically inclusive engagements with and interpretations of mark-  
making

Asemic writing is not about anything. Asemia(ae) are marks that appear like  
language, but are not about communicating meaning or expressing  
personality or ego. They are marks not necessarily human initiated or  
engendered. They occur in nature and in culture. They are formal, not  
expressive. How's that?

Perfect, [Mary!](#)

I just read all of this conversation. I hope we are not trying to come up with a  
definition. [Johnny Mac](#), your second mention of Lau Tzu, "not the story of  
our lives" says something important to me about non-attachment. I think  
asemic writing is free of meaning and attachment.

I more took the original question to mean what does it mean to you.

Yr responses above are interesting, Mary, though I can't entirely agree. This  
issue of meaning is longstanding among both experimental artists and  
poets. I suppose it depends on what you mean by "not about anything" or  
"not communicating meaning" For me and for most of those experimental  
poets and artists, there is, there must be meaning in any and all art  
created. Obviously what that meaning is is open to question and it's really  
up to the viewer or reader to make the final call. But that is not at all the  
same as saying the work is not about anything or does not communicate  
any meaning.

Mary, why I originally created distinctions between the images, This one brings  
into the world of the senses. For me, I am always living in the question  
.somethings I am clear about yet do not hold them like a belief, more  
noticing what is active in the process of creating. I agree there is no  
inherent meaning at all about pure Asemics. As I stated..... "As to the  
roaming of sages,  
They move in utter emptiness,  
Let their minds meander in the great nothingness;  
They run beyond convention  
And go through where there is no gateway.  
They listen to the soundless  
And look at the formless,  
They are not constrained by society  
And not bound to its customs.

Lao-tzu" I am also clear that pure abstraction in my paintings is of the same ilk.  
In visual poetry and the works about the landscape I paint, something else  
occurs. I am taken by an experience or is it the muse wrapping me in its  
arms. The image has some attachment to a particular subject. I am clear  
that in the process of making either type of image they are not born out of  
mind, yet the distinction of attachment and meaning do occur in the latter,  
and are precursory to the making, for me.

! for me it's like abstract expressionism - creating meaning and expression  
with marks. not necessarily alphabets. miss out the word stage. The best  
thing is you identify it by a feeling about the marks.

! Perhaps when one does it, but when many indulge in "asemic" writing it  
can look faddish and labored.

! and the message is in the medium

- ! I'll try to be clear, Spencer. I'm not saying that what I make or observe doesn't have meaning for myself as an artist. I'm trying to say that in this tiny oeuvre of asemic writing/art, there is a place, at least for me, where I step aside. Asemia occupies, for me, a place of 'occurrence'. It is not anthropocentric. It is asemic. It happens. Someone in this thread said it's not narrative. That works for me, though I've seen asemic spreads that tell a grand story. It's paradoxical, because arguing my viewpoint is antithetical to my process. It's ok. Paradox happens.
- ! Thanks, Mary. I appreciate yr thoughts. I would just respond that 1) narrative would be an example of the most narrow conservative definition of meaning in art. Almost all experimental poets for over 100 years would not consider the meaning of their work based on narrative. 2) I don't quite get the relevance of anthropocentric to the above question. I can only surmise that this comes in because you have a very traditional or conservative idea of what meaning in art is. Anthropocentrism may have been a significant issue in art 100 years ago and it may still be if you are talking about the the most traditional forms of art, but that's got nothing (or very little) to do with any art I have practiced in my life, poetry, visual poetry, asemic art or any other visual art I have made over the course of 4 decades. And the same can be said for almost all artists, poets I have known and most that have influenced me.
- ! Yeah similar to the paradox in a Zen koan or state of being. I just had a small epiphany and realize that... I am my brain is exactly Asemic mach is this was a lovely little hole to fall into thank you universe!
- ! Understanding is the booby prize .....
- ! It is Zen to me. And is therefore delightful. Doing what I do naturally finally has a place to wander freely with within the realms... Sans the guilt.
- ! We want understanding but when we get it, we don't understand.
- ! I'm just a young thing, Spencer. My output and experience as an artist is limited. My personal ethic when I am working, has very little to do with what is conservative or outré. I prefer not to be bound too tightly. I think personal narrative (WHO I AM WHERE I AM IN THE HISTORY OF ART) jumps out often from these pages. I prefer to remain unconcerned and on the edges. I enjoy bringing my stuff, tools, time, self, place, space to the studio of equanimity. There is an equality of being there. I do like sharing ideas on-line, and even arguing sometimes. However, I think your categorical name-calling is a bit rude and uncalled-for. Perhaps sometime when I am in Iowa we can grab a table at Cafe Diem and discourse further and with hand gestures, but really! Conservative????!!! Insignificant!!!!????
- ! I'm sorry you're upset, Mary. As far as I'm concerned calling me rude or saying my post was "uncalled-for" is closer to name-calling than anything I said. I stand by my statement re narrative: in the all the contexts of art I have been involved in, narrative conception of meaning is conservative. That is all I said. I never used the word significant or insignificant. I also stand by my statements about anthropocentrism. This is mainly about the historical framework of art that I have been involved in for most of my life. It is a very broad framework, not a small or personal one. As for personal narrative jumping out, I learn alot more about yr personal life from yr posts than you will ever learn about my life from mine. And I like what I learn, don't consider what you share about yr everyday life either egocentric or anthropocentric. Implying that sharing knowledge about the history of art in a discussion about the meaning of a given art is shouting "personal narrative" just because I mentioned this in a broad context of

my entire artistic experience (something I almost never do, in this group or anywhere online or in person) that seems to me unfair. At the very least it indicates that you don't know me very well or what I'm about. If I really was concerned with my experience in an egocentric way, I wouldn't even be having this discussion. I probably wouldn't be on any of these creative FB groups. I'd be figuring ways to exploit what I've accomplished or at least to make a little money from it.

! Hah! Money that's a good one tell us another.

I'm glad someone brought up zen. I've been thinking since yesterday that western thought maybe doesn't deal with this so clearly. Art is a finger pointing at the moon, not to be mistaken for the moon itself

>> ??

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asemic\\_writing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asemic_writing) Asemic writing -

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia Asemic writing is a wordless open semantic form of...EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

opinions require respect.

Thanks [Nico Vassilakis](#) for such a vibrant forum!

Aw shit! I'm sorry if I was rude, Spencer, and I'm sorry you are upset. The discussion of narrative is not even a part of this. I said someone said asemia is not narrative and I agreed. I do not intend to demean this whole history and framework of art, but I'm not taking this as seriously as you do and I apologize to anyone else whom I have offended. I've enjoyed a good part of this conversation, just not my part. I'm going to go play on Free the Pixels! (and I knew you'd bring up all my sharing on my timeline...I just knew it---I'm joking at my expense right now this very minute, Spencer. I can't stop.

There are no proofreaders on asemic writing.

:: What the hell is arsemic writing??

For me? Asemic is glitter, there is only writing, mark making, Leroy was here, a voice calling out in the wilderness, the unnavigable distance between us.

Illegibility is an interesting border. If I'm illiterate in the language or forms any meaning is lost. Head crash

Asemic writing fails at being intellectualized. Don't look for any pat answers. As this lengthy thread shows... there ain't none!

Words with no meaning, things with no identity. Almost godlike.

We name the thing to make it real.

Autocorrect

"Moon! Clouds hide it"

Shattered language.D

:: Peter Ciccariello--nothing wrong with my car, amigo.

I'm sorry too, Mary. The last thing I want is any lingering bad feelings between us. You are one of my favorite people on FB, honestly. It just happened that I strongly disagreed with things you said in three posts in a row. If I was in yr shoes that would have stung also. But nothing I said was meant in any way to be personal. And I didn't say you were rude, I just was trying to defend myself against yr claim that I was. But let's forget it. As my ex used to say, "life's too short"

Vive la difference

what is "writing" other than art? English is actually the reversed engineered script of harmonic writings, such as Arabic and Hebrew. Asemic is an evolving form that taps into so many areas of our holographic psyche... what is is that which isn't...

Oh you guys are all so swell! I love the discussions here and the points of view. I think understanding and ah-ha ing are very, very precious but quickly transitory





I am a semiotics expert: I can deeply explain you what ASEMIC WRITING means for only two glasses of good wine (and the plane tickets, of course)

... try putting them all together in a fluid soup that is tasteful without using too much salt.

I am interested in where each of you come from to Asemics, writers, painters, street artists, musicians maybe mathematicians, care to share:)

I always loved calligraphy...and then I studied linguistics for a while...I am a recovering academic. A bit enchanted by writing systems of the world, and I don't want to be confined to drab quotations or Latin script. I haven't actually posted any work here yet because I have young children and don't get to make art too often at the moment.

Joanna when they sleep thanks for sharing yourself..

I grew up in Japan but never learned the language. Then I saw The Dark Crystal when I was 10 and I convinced myself I was the conduit of an alien language. I bring this principle also to poetry writing. Like speaking in tongues and snake handling but with more bleeding.

What a passionate and prolific bunch of folks! Heart

i worked closely for a few years when i was a kid with Bob Cobbing Johnny so it's always an interface between writing (poetics), gesture (dance, drawing, writing), sound composition - i see anemic writing as a text for vocal and instrumental performance (kind of a score but not a literal one) and visualization (almost as in data visualization but not in a simple way and using all manner of traditional and contemporary emergent tools for mark-making through both analogue and digital morphologies) . a lot of play and improvisation and diverse angles of attack and reflective pleasure and the embodied interplays between the seen & the heard

Asemic writing is free of limiting adjuncts and therefore attractive to those who realise the difficulty of describing reality with language.

Writing is an attempt to communicate. I understand 21st century ennui might find satisfaction in meaningless marks - that in itself is a comment one might feel compelled to communicate. There are many reasons to write asemically. [Chris](#) nailed it.

... Tout ce qui ne cesse pas de ne pas s'écrire.

'Recovering academic' - nail on the head there, Joanna Taylor. Me, i'm on the Apo-Semic Cure -" just say - you no it makes ..."  
recovered from grad school by working in public schools now retired and just now unpacking my studio...26 years later...art lives...perhaps

Round Two: Anything that makes a mark.

If you have to ask. You do not deserve an answer.

Bit arrogant there John Hastings no room for people to learn with that attitude!

No ! It is an exhortation to stop, think, feel and dream for oneself. If one takes the time to do this the answers will reveal themselves of their own accord. The answers come from within, not from without. The answer to the question is analogic, achronic, outside the realm of language. The place where word gets in the way. This requires application and cerebration. No shorthand of recieved ideas and cliff note adcopy epiphanies from the groundlings. If you want the experience of Art. You gotta work for it. If that seems like arrogance, You are the one with the problem. Not me.

of course it is always someone else's problem when the mind is so full of itself you probably live your life being right about everything ! LTFU!

You are not listening, Why am I not surprised. I live in a space where there is no right or wrong, only the truth of the imagination. It is not a question of being right or wrong. You hijack the conversation. Poor you !

If that is your response ? You must be starving...

Ah! Poetry! A logorific response emerges out of the subterranean tumultous of pure being that feels fulsome and right. More to the point. It feels...

loving this post

enough!!!!!!

It is.

Writing is organized markings. The eye sees thinking, it reads a trail of thinking, left behind. Writing is organized markings left behind."

Flirting with legibility and system, but not engaging.

The only written language built on indeterminacy

John and Johnny: Carry on your passionate discussion in asemics. Now THAT would be interesting.

I disagree with John Hastings comment that people shouldn't ask questions about Asemic Writing. Many people probably don't realise that the great Australian inventor, Henry Hoke questioned the idea of Asemic Writing during the second world war and developed Hoke's Asemic Algorithm and his theory on parallel universes. Alan Turing was very interested in this at the time and it is said that he would never have been able to crack the German codes during WW2 without Hokes Asemic Algorithm.

If one does not formulate questions to live in and enquire deeply. What else? I coach 30 odd people a week in visual arts. What if my answer was "If you have to ask you don't deserve an answer" quote. Jeez !

I deeply value that asemic writers write and share their own language and that fellow writers pause to read and appreciate others not yet lexiconed words. The rhetorical arguments that come with any entrenched linguistic system don't belong here by definition.

Well you seem to have a point of view and have engaged now Kimm lol

I must say [Nico Vassilakis](#) this has been a great way of meeting some of the artists here. Your Question was most stimulating .To say the least. Thank you

Every one has a point of view [Johnny](#). Some see the tree from above, some see it from below, some to the right, some to the left....every degree imaginable has a view. I always enjoy your view!

thanks Kimm. Do you not see any use in this enquiry though

I live on the inquiry Sir! That's what it's all about.





