

Modernism – Materiality – Meaning @ UPENN
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Presentation title:

“colliding phenomena”: Susan Howe’s Facing Pages and Sonic Materialisms

Presentation abstract:

Since *Secret History of the Dividing Line* (1978), *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time* (1987), *Kidnapped* (2002), and *Frolic Architecture* (2010), for example, many of Susan Howe’s poems including history have engaged the forms and tropes of the captivity narrative, especially *TOM TIT TOT* (2014). In all of these works, we simultaneously experience *sound forms in time* through both sides of the page and across facing pages. These cross-genre sequential multimodal collages invite our encounters with inter- and intra- image/texts—recalling the Latin, *textus*—experienced as woven *kairic* compositions of sonic materialisms and temporalities. Howe’s vital intersections among archival sources, transcriptive processes, book arts methods and materials thus recover, remediate, and regenerate languages and lives while also subverting their captivity by teleological historiographic and institutional frameworks. My presentation places Susan Howe’s poetics and praxis within this context, giving particular emphasis to the poet’s collaborative multimodal volumes from Telephone Books, AWEDE Press, Coracle Press, The Grenfell Press, MoMA, and others (including open access broadsides and pamphlets from Yale Union; and studio recordings from Drag City and ISSUE Project Room).

W. Scott Howard teaches poetics and poetry in the Department of English & Literary Arts at the University of Denver. He is founding editor of *Reconfigurations: A Journal for Poetics & Poetry / Literature & Culture*; and is co-editor (with Broc Rossell) of *Poetics and Praxis ‘After’ Objectivism* (University of Iowa Press, 2018). He is the author of two collections of poems: *ROPES* (with images by Ginger Knowlton) from Delete Press (2014); and *SPINNAKERS* from The Lune (2016). His critical monograph, *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe’s factual telepathy*, is forthcoming from Talisman House in 2019. Professor Howard’s work has received support from the Modern Language Association, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Beinecke Library, Yale University.