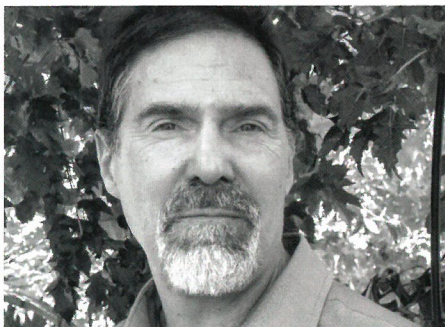


Interview with
Dr. W. Scott Howard

SONIC-IMAGE- TEXTS AND OTHER IDEAS

Interview by Erinrose Mager



W. Scott Howard teaches poetics and poetry in the Department of English and 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, PhD '13) 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 National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Mager: I'm interested to hear about your recently published books and projects and—to boot—the projects you're working on currently. Have you worked on any projects with current or former students? What was this collaboration process like?

Howard: The *Poetics and Praxis* book (which came out in August 2018) represents a path I've been following for many years from my days at Powell's Books (in Portland, OR) to my 'After' Objectivism courses at DU to the grad. course I'll be teaching next year on documentary poetics and sonic materialisms. The volume includes chapters from Graham Foust and Julie Carr plus seven other chapters from

colleagues in Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. The book engages poetics and praxis at the collective level in the spirit of the legacy we're celebrating; the volume concludes with a conversation among six additional contributors (including Rae Armantrout and Mark McMorris). And the Introduction, which Broc Rossell and I co-wrote, presents a paradigm shifting argument for the legacy of this movement from the 1930s to now. Working with Broc was one of the most exciting collaborations in my career thus far. We're happy that the book is out in the world, at last. My next book, which will be coming out later this year from Talisman House, is *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe's factual telepathy*. This volume also charts a path I've been following since Susan's works first found me at Powell's in the 1990s. Since the book is currently in the early stages of production, I don't want to say too much about it right now, except that I am really looking forward to seeing the work in published form. The volume includes some of my most intensive theoretical writing as well as some of my most lyrical and personal work. The book also includes an interview with Susan that represents nearly four years of our correspondence. In recent months, I've also been writing poems and creating a sequence of sonic-image-texts, some of which will be appearing this spring and summer in the journals, *B O D Y* and *word for / word*.

Mager: What are some recent or forthcoming DU community-related events and/or activities that you're particularly excited about? Tell us a little about your relationship to recent English Department events (and, perhaps, their relationship to your own scholarship).

Howard: During 2019, I am working with my colleagues Trace Reddell (emergent digital practices), Thomas Nail (philosophy), and Michael Caston (mechanical & materials engineering) to organize and host a sequence of events with support from the University of Denver's Center for Innovation in the Liberal and Creative Arts (CILCA) and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. These activities will include contributors from our community who will present their transdisciplinary works. In particular, we are looking for makers, practitioners, and scholars interested in collaborating across the arts, humanities, and sciences—with a sensitivity to the materiality

of their methods, media, and praxis. These DU events will highlight intersections of critical theoretical methods, classroom experiences, public encounters and actions. In this respect, all events will promote engagement with the larger Denver public. And, as you may have guessed, these initiatives also dovetail with my interests in the Objectivist writers; in Susan Howe's poetry, prose, and multimodal performances; in Shakespeare, Cavendish, Milton, and legacies of poetics and praxis—that is, shaping experience and knowledge through artistic forms of social action.

Mager: A little bird told me that you will be taking over Bin Ramke's role as editor of the *Denver Quarterly*; what excites you most about taking over this position? Where do you see DQ headed under your direction?

Howard: I am deeply honored by this opportunity to serve as editor of *Denver Quarterly* (beginning fall 2019) and I have much to learn. Bin, Thirri and I will be working together during spring quarter so that I'll be ready for next year. I have a notebook full of ideas and lists, sketches and dreams. I look forward to working with everyone in this cohort, and I'm excited about the journal's past, present, and future!

Mager: Any inspiring research-related trips you've been on lately? Seen any cool astrolabes, by any chance?

Howard: In October, I gave an invited presentation at the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. During one of the afternoons, we visited the Collegium Maius and toured the rooms where Copernicus studied (from 1491 to 1495); we saw some of the books and instruments that he would have used (including an astrolabe, a torquetum, and a celestial globe). The astrolabe was fabricated in Cordoba in the ninth century and was inscribed with Arabic letters and numerals. I visited Cordoba, Spain with my family last summer; so when I beheld that astrolabe there in the room where Copernicus studied, I was overwhelmed by the object's own story of travel and transformation through space and time and so many hands and minds. My visit to Kraków was a memorable experience, and I would love to return someday.