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ARCHITECTURE AND
SUBNATURE

CARL ANDRE: POEMS

\$10.00

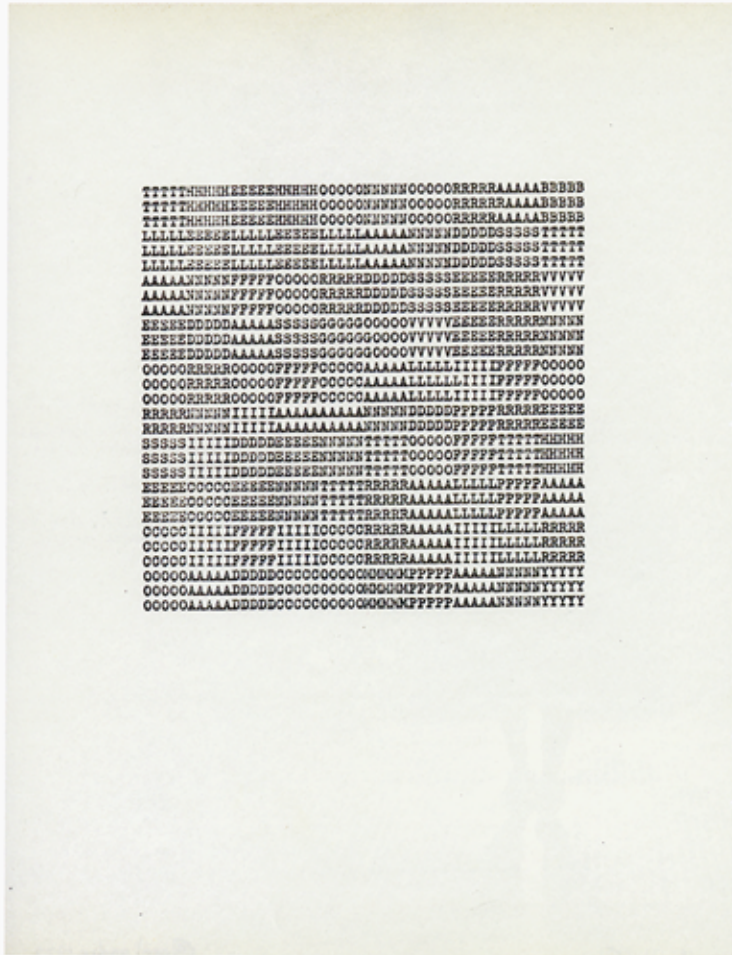


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Carl Andre: Poems

INTRODUCTION BY GAVIN DELAHUNTY



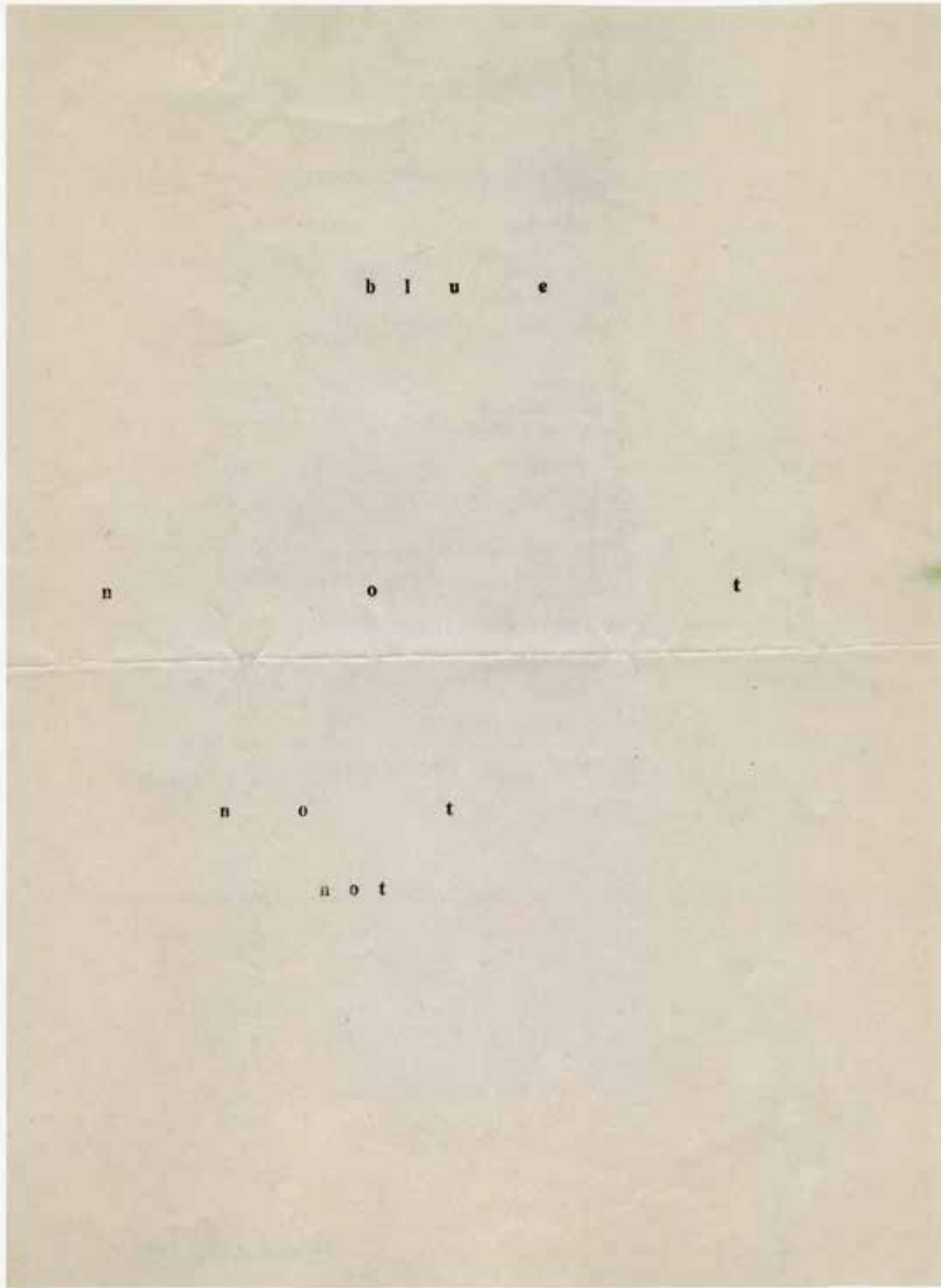
CARL ANDRE's abstract sculptures helped define Minimalism in the 1960s. Yet his monumental oeuvre of poetry, no less pioneering and prolific, has remained obscure. Now two forthcoming projects promise to reassess the artist's practice in all its material and conceptual complexity: Tate Publishing is compiling a comprehensive catalogue of Andre's poetry works from 1957 to 2000, edited by curator GAVIN DELAHUNTY; and a major retro-

spective of the artist's work opens next spring at Dia:Beacon. In anticipation of these landmark events, *Artforum* has assembled twelve poems by Andre, published here for the first time. Introducing this exclusive portfolio in the pages that follow, Delahunty argues for language's primary role throughout the artist's six-decade career, offering new terms by which we may understand the radical innovation and narrative experiment of Andre's poetic enterprise.

VI SAS

CURTAIN
RED WRITER
FAT CLUB FOOT
FAT QUEEN
GLAD HANDING
LIKE A TREE
WHITE SPACE
WHITE CUBISTS
BAR ROOM
SWEET FACES
BLACK EAGLE
AMBIGUOUS WOOD
RED RECTITUDE
SHORT FICTION
PRIVATE SCREENING
EVERLASTING ARM
BLACK RECREATION
RASH DAUGHTER
WHITE RAINBOW
BOOM TIBERIUS
BLIND TIMBER
OLD BOYHOODS
DELICATE FLOWMEN
CLAY MATCHES
PUTTY CROWNS
TRANSPARENT SHADES
FREE SAMPLE
POILED MOUTHS
MANHATTAN ROSE
HAIR SHRAPNEL
FRENCH KISSES
LUNATIC SPADES
CHINESE DROPSY
BASS JAIL
SPANISH PRISONERS
WHITE FISH
CHISEL STICKS
CONSTITUTIONAL IRONY
HAND JOB
SNOW JOB
FISH FIER
BLOWN GOLD
BLOND VENUS
ORAL GILT
COLD BLUE ASTRONOMY
FALSE FORGERY
LINCOLN ROAD
THE HIGH HAT
RED SQUARE
CONGRESSIONAL CALENDAR
ARROWS PREFERRED
TWO OUT OF THREE
AMAZED BULL
UNACKNOWLEDGED LEGISLATORS
MANUAL FUTURISM
RALEGH'S BEARD
BROWN WHITENING
ARS GRATIA
RED LINER
FREE HANDS
RIGID BLUE
BLOWN SILK
AROUND THE WORLD
WHORES 1/2 & 1 EYED JACKS
VERS LIBRE
MIXED BAG
RALEGH ANTIPODES
MEXICAN GULF
BLIND CUPIDITY
UP THE FIGURE
SKETCHED VICE
PROPHYLACTIC CUBISM
SCRATCHED ENTRY
LUCK OF THE DRAW
DRAWN LYRIC
OUT HIGH
THE JAPANESE GIFT
EYE TO EYE
POINT TO POINT
THE REASON WHY
TYPE METAL
CHARM'S MUSIC
BLANCHED ALMOND
WATCHING THE RADIO
VERSE BALLOT
WHITE HOPS
SQUARE MOUTHS
DUCTLESS WORMS
MALDEN MEDLEY
BALLED WOOD
DYED MARRIAGE
WHITE YOKE
TITLED POET
FINGER MAN

Q U E E N S B R I D E Q U E E N S B R I D
E Q U E E N S B R I D E Q U E E N S B R I
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U E E N S B R I D E Q U E E N S B R I D E



TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM

JESUS
JERUSALEM JERICHO BETHP BETHANY
BETHLEHEM
OLIVES ZACCHAEUS JESUS
MARTHA JLAZARUS
MARY LORD JESUS
LORD JESUS
JUDAS ISCARIOT SIMON ZACCHAEUS
KING SION
JESUS
JZACCHAEUS LORD
JESUS LORD
JESUS JEWS
ABRAHAM HOSANNA JESUS ON LAZARUS
DAVID SON LORD HOSANNA
HOSANNA NA LORD
JERUSALEM DAVID LORD HOSANNA LAZA
JERUSALEM JESUS JERUZARETH
SALEM LEE JESUS GOD
BETHANY JERUSALEM JESUS
KING HOSANNA BETHANY
ISRAEL LORD
JESUS
JESUS KING SION
JESUSNA JESUS SOJERUSA AVID
LEM JESUS
LORD JESUS

DIRGE ON MONTEZUMA SLOWLY

Mexico, sides, before, day, parts, nothing, enough
this, cease, city
Montezuma, grief, him, him
come, him, words, lies
terms, said, war, alive, die
him, people, war, Mexico
darts, arrows, them, him, him, Lord, us, Lord
name, Cuiclahuac, Ixtapalapa, through, dead, power, desired, before, them
duty, stones, head, leg, food, it, not
it, dead
him, soldiers, him, father, at, was
Mexico, person, subjugated
dead
Christian, wounds, him
Lord, Cuiclahuac, Captains, dead, die, him, it, was, us, king, sons
Mexico, so, dead, city
dead, chieftains, prisoners, shoulders, Captains, death, death
truth, stones
dead, him, this, ceased, fury, us, Lord, Idols, king, Montezuma, burial
stones, arrows, places

228) 12/10/1904

228) 12/10/1904

(1859)

WHITE MEN
CRIMSON CROSS
ON THE
SETTLED BY
TERRITORY

VERY LARGE BLACK
COAL-BLACK
& HIS HAIR IS
NO RIGHTS WHICH
MAGNIFY THE HAPPINESS

BLUE ATMOSPHERE
CLOSING FIELDS OF
THE RED NOSE
FUN PINCH THE
WHITES & BLACKS

HUES WHICH MOCK
SO BLUE LIPS
THY GOLDEN HAIR
A LOCK OF THY
IN A BLACK BRAID MET

HAG SHE TURNED
FROM WASHINGTON
UNDER LIEUT ISRAEL
GREEN A DRAGON
GREEN MARINES

IN THE ARMORY
BROWN IS DYED
HIS ROSE WREATH
TRIBE BENEATH
ARCHED THE RAINBOW

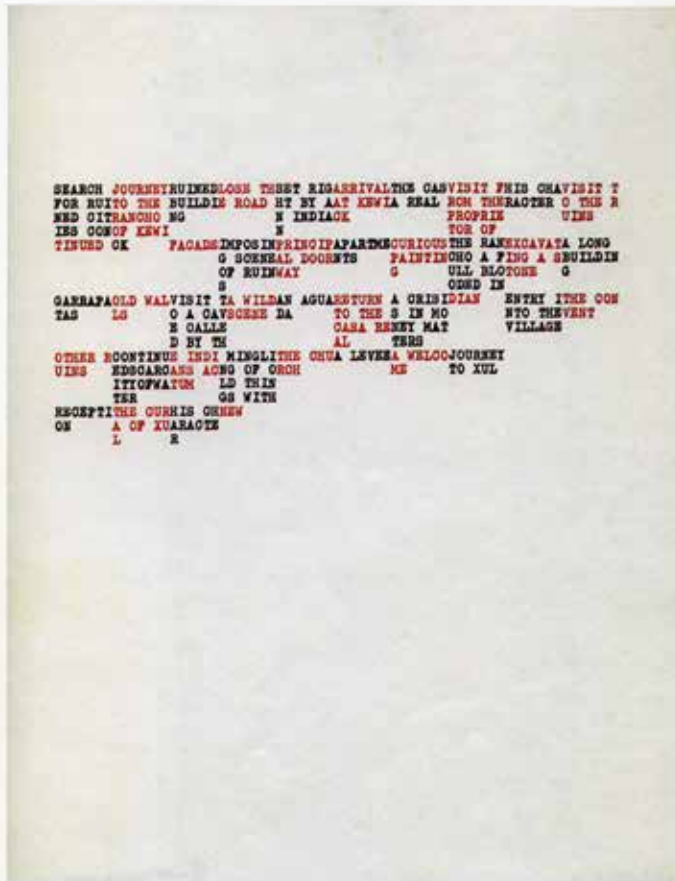
OF THE PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENT OF THE
ARMY IN CHIEF
BROWN COMMANDER
OLD OSAWATOMIE

BY THE BLUE RIDGE
BEEN DAMMED UP
THE GAP THROUGH WHICH
CLOSING FIELDS
ARRANGED & COLOURED

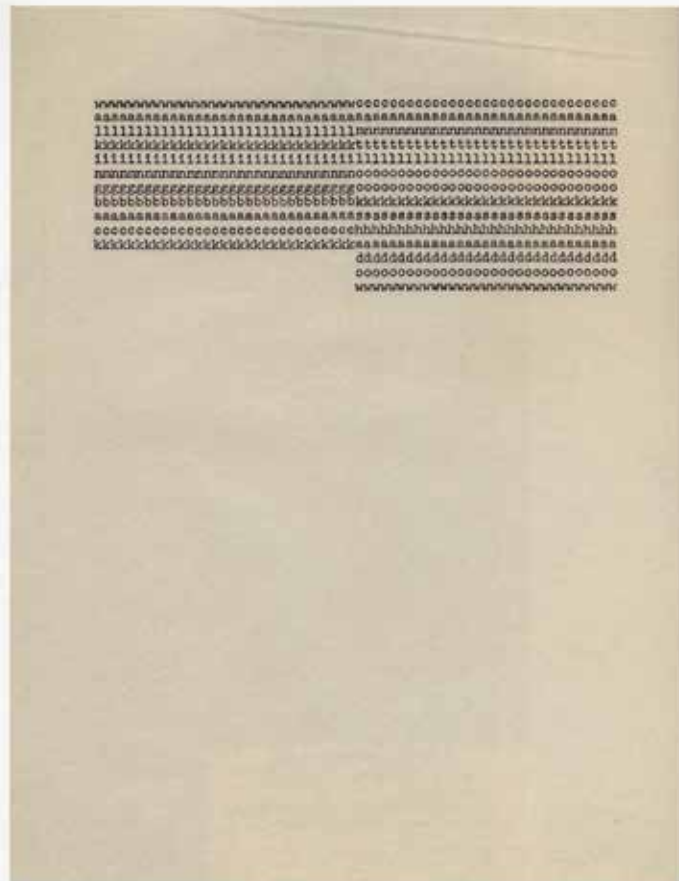
RED WITH RAGE
WHITES & BLACKS
COLOURS THE SCENE
THE RICHMOND GREYS
SEEMED TO BE BLACK

Carl Andre
13 Willoughby Ave
Brooklyn 5 NY

8
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l
ly
i
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hn
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i
ts
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or
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Carl Andre, SEARCH JOURNEY- RUINEDLOSE THSET RIGARRIVAL THE CASVIDIT FHS CHAVISIT T, 1972, typewriter ink on paper, 11 x 8 1/2". From the twenty-six-part suite YUCATAN, 1972.



Carl Andre, wwwwwwwwwwww- wwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwcccc- cccccccccccccccccccc, 1962, typewriter ink on paper, 11 x 8 1/2".

ALTHOUGH CARL ANDRE is best known for laconic things—obdurate sculptures made of metal or bricks, laid flat on the floor in symmetrical configurations—he has also made an art of words. Indeed, Andre is a prolific poet, and his poems have always played a crucial part in his work, their brilliant investigations of text and pattern making their way into exhibitions, extremely rare editions, and citations. Yet the poems remain largely unseen and unspoken to this day.

For his written contribution to the catalogue for Kynaston McShine's now iconic exhibition "Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors" held at the Jewish Museum in 1966, Andre submitted *Leverwords*, 1966, a poem of four stanzas on a

single page. The work is composed exclusively of four-letter nouns, paratactically arranged in a format suggestive of *Lever*, 1966, the sculpture he was exhibiting in the show: The multiple-word composition, beginning with "beam" and ending with "room," was in part a response to the 137 firebricks extending from the gallery wall, thereby proposing a way to "read" *Lever*.¹

The presentation of *Leverwords* in this context announced the importance of poetry within Andre's practice. But it also diverted the discussion of his poems away from their relationship with contemporary experimental literature and toward enduring comparisons with his sculpture. It wasn't until "Carl

Andre: Seven Books" at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, in 1973 that the true extent of Andre's commitment to poetry was acknowledged. The ICA show inspired the first retrospective of his poems at Modern Art Oxford in the UK in 1975, an exhibition later echoed by shows at Paula Cooper Gallery in New York, the Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam between 1993 and 1994; a permanent display of Andre's poetry at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, was assembled around the same time. In recent years we have seen noteworthy presentations of the poems at various galleries and independent institutions in Europe and the US, and yet a complete account of

Andre's poems exist in a tantalizing space somewhere between the established categories and forms of poetry and those of sculpture.

Andre's catalogue of more than one thousand poems has yet to be assembled.

In these previous exhibitions, the emphasis has been on the correspondence between the poems' layout and Andre's sculptural configurations. This interpretation was set early on by a number of critics who identified connections between both kinds of work, including seriality, geometry, self-referentiality (particularly to material), and the use of the whole space (whether room or page). Of the rolling verses in *one hundred sonnets (I flowers)*, 1963, Chinati's associate director Rob Weiner notes that "the repetition of single words commands the page by forming a sequence of fields directly related to the 'places' created in Andre's metal floor work."² In the most recent monograph on the artist, Alistair Rider's thorough and illuminating *Carl Andre: Things in Their Elements* (2011), there is an admirable attempt to consider the poems on their own terms, with two of the twelve chapters dedicated to their examination. But the poems' inclusion in a book dominated by Andre's significant contribution to sculpture only reinforces the sense that their analysis is impossible without recourse to his three-dimensional oeuvre. Andre himself has remained resolutely ambiguous about the relationship between these two strands of his practice while drawing parallels between their processes of production, graphically stating that he "used the typewriter as a machine or lathe or saw, to apply letters on the page."³ This ostensibly innocuous juxtaposition has forestalled discussion or analysis of the poems beyond a visual arts context, effectively silencing their poetic voice.

NEVER PUBLISHED BEFORE, the twelve poems presented here will be a revelation to many.⁴ Spanning a period from *QUEENSBRIDGE QUEENSBRID*, 1958, to *TTTTTHHH-HHEEEEEHHHHHO OOOONNNN-NOOOORRRRAAAAABBBBB* (a page from *STILLANOVEL*), 1972, the dozen have been chosen to introduce another as-yet-unmapped aspect of Andre's poems—their relationship to poetry itself.

Concrete poetry is an undeniable touchstone for Andre. Several of the poems in this portfolio, including *g*, 1958, and *wwwwwwwwwwwwwww*

wwwwwwwwwwwwwwwccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc, 1962, both anticipate and reflect work by artists such as Henri Chopin, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Eugen Gomringer, and Dom Sylvester Houéard, particularly in their use of the spatial parameters of the standardized page. We might also trace a number of visual and conceptual intersections with the work of non-Western practitioners such as the Argentinean artist León Ferrari, the influential Noigandres group of Brazil, or the late Japanese poet Niikuni Seiichi: All were absorbed with poetry that explored a communication of forms rather than the traditional transfer of context and narrative. However, Andre's poems do not share concrete poetry's frequent use of a wide variety of different typefaces and font sizes. Unless handwritten, the artist's texts are made with either a Royal or an Olympia typewriter, forcing a uniform typestyle. And they are infused with complex historical, political, and personal narratives, in great contrast to Minimalism's often stoic remove. In other words, they are not—or are not just—abstract visual poems following Stéphane Mallarmé's model. Andre's poems exist in a tantalizing space somewhere between the established categories and forms of poetry and those of sculpture; as such, their status remains uncertain.

The selection in these pages demonstrates the astonishing diversity of poetic form throughout Andre's practice, from the relatively straightforward five-line stanzas of *(1859)*, 1963, to the more experimental, postlinear poems *CITY OSTRICHES FOREHEAD*, 1972, and *b l u e*, 1959, which disperse letters and words around the page, emphasizing pattern and calling typographic alignment into question. One of the most productive tensions in these works' ambiguous status is their relationship to the semiotics of language, which in turn draws our attention to poetic voice—here, despite a deconstructed syntax, we find a surprising emotive range, from impassioned and generous to melancholic. Andre explores humor in the word list *VISAS*, 1960; tragedy in the cento-inspired patchwork *DIRG E O N M O N T E Z U M A S L O W L Y*, 1964; and religiosity in the epic *TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM*, 1964, which when analyzed reveals itself to be a comprehensive descrip-



Carl Andre, CITY OSTRICHES FOREHEAD, 1972, ink on paper, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2".

tion of the biblical scene. In this rhythmic incantation the words stutter and resound, insisting upon the sonority of the spoken word. The works evoke a tradition spanning the twentieth century through our present moment, bringing to mind the poets Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Charles Olson, and Susan Howe. Andre simultaneously embodies and resists this poetic inheritance, ultimately creating an ars poetica of his own. □

GAVIN DELAHUNTY IS HEAD OF EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS AT TATE LIVERPOOL. (SEE CONTRIBUTORS.)

NOTES
1. Robert Smithson once noted that while we find ourselves "looking" at Andre's poems, his sculptures are things we also "read." Robert Smithson, "The Artist as Site-Seer; or a Distorphic Essay" (1966-67) in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 345n47.
2. "On Carl Andre's Poems," Rob Weiner, Chinati Foundation, accessed May 16, 2013, www.chinati.org/visit/collection/carlandre_robweiner.php.
3. James Meyer, ed., *Cats: Texts 1959-2004* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 212.
4. Two of the poems appeared in small-edition artist's books: *TTTTTHHH-HHEEEEEHHHHHO OOOONNNN-NOOOORRRRAAAAABBBBB* in *STILLANOVEL*, 1972, and *TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM* in *Lyrics and Odes*, 1969.