

Beyond ... "unlike most 'museum' art, it will generate genuine participatory relations with its audience and be able to operate outside the traditional institutional sites and conventions. Participatory art and communication is the core principle of what we are looking for at Beyond..."

In 1966 artist Tom Phillips set himself a task: to find a second-hand book for threepence and alter every page by painting, collage and cut-up techniques to create an entirely new version. He found his threepenny novel in a junkshop on Peckham Rye, South London. This was an 1892 Victorian obscurity titled *A Human Document* by W.H Mallock and he titled his altered book *A Humument*. The first version of all 367 treated pages was published in 1973 since when there have been four revised editions. *A Humument* is now one of the best known and loved of all 20th Century artist's books and is regarded as a seminal classic of postmodern art. A Human Document. A Hum(an) (Doc)ument. A Humument. <http://humument.com>

PROPOSAL >>MEMEFEST: Radical Intimacies

Jondi Keane

CONTESTED MEME-ING: CO-OPT OR COOPERATE

TO_ _ _ _ LIPS: The Site of Contested Meaning.

In the early 1980's the poet Michael Blitz and I began a work called the *Library of Fixed books*. We took existing books and made close readings, so close that the interpretation and analysis of the books vacillated between imposition of meaning and fixation on the transversal meanings made available by the text. Some fixed books were exhibited others became source material for further writings. In the matter of a few years we fixed over 50 books and fixated upon innumerable intimacies of reading.

The ever-increasing library expanded into Manuscripts that were themselves constructed as if the inter-textuality generating an individual's writing was already a revision; the reversion-ing of itself exploiting the reconfigurative power of imposition and super-imposition, encounter and counter-narrative. This kind of intimate encounter with a book usually began by underlining everything and ended up by crossing everything out. We called these activities *fixations*. More broadly we called the enterprise "Contourism" – to go with and against the tour and push out the contour of consciousness.

So, if you take (To_ _ _ _ lips) Tom Phillip's impulse—to add, subtract, fix, impose, read and re-read—into the inter-subjective, collective and contested space of shared meaning you end up with a radical form of intimacy that speaks to the intimacy of engagement with writing, with the voice of the other, with the site of meaning

making as a performative social dynamic that is subject to the contingencies of the situation, deictic relation and the players.

The work: a participatory platform of relation.

The materials: installation designed for single and dual-purpose activation. The work has two modes: performative production of meaning through re-vision, and archiving and display of video capture to play back the

The scenario: a person walks into a space. A plexi-glass booth stands in front of a large wall on which a text is projected. The person sees a slit in the acrylic sheets through which he or she can pick up a paint ball gun. Vinyl letters on the acrylic provide simple instructions to shoot at and block out word to create new texts.

The projections would be, for example, black text on white background using black paint balls. When the session is over, the projection can be changed to white text on black background using white paint balls. Selection of a variety of provocative text TBA.

Celebrity sessions: Celebrity shooters could be invited to perform their enacted reading and /or contest meaning with another celebrity shooter for designated public sessions.

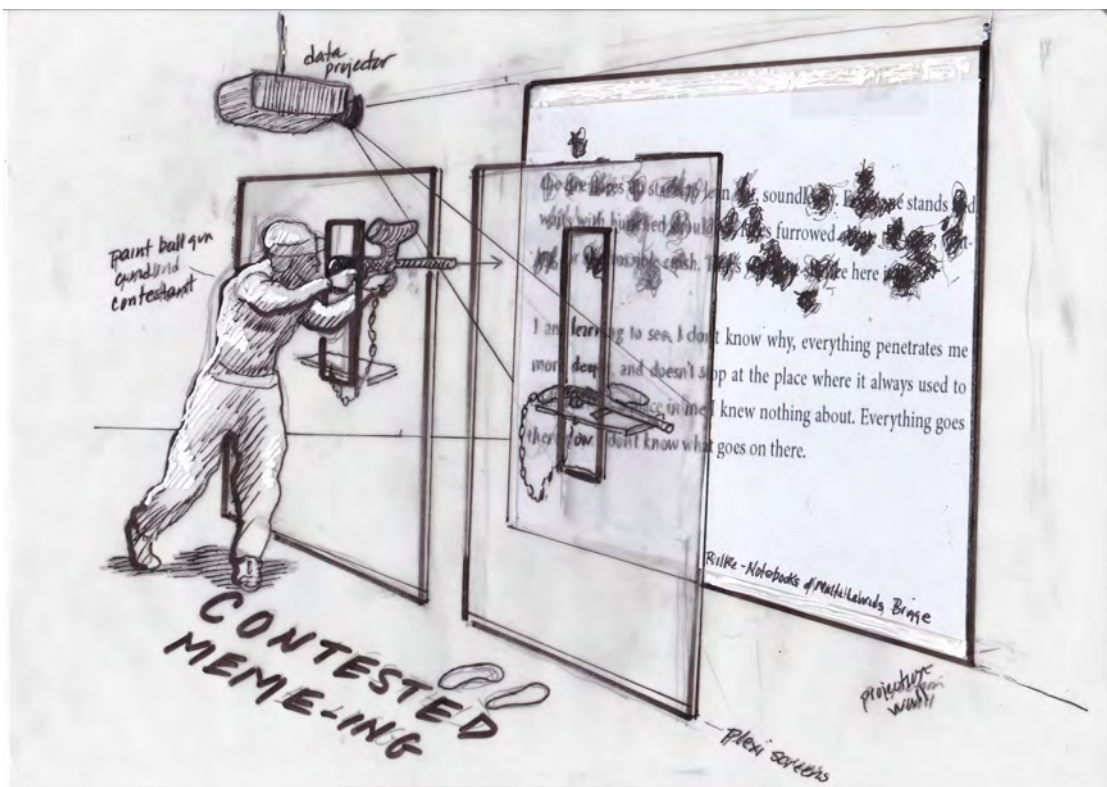
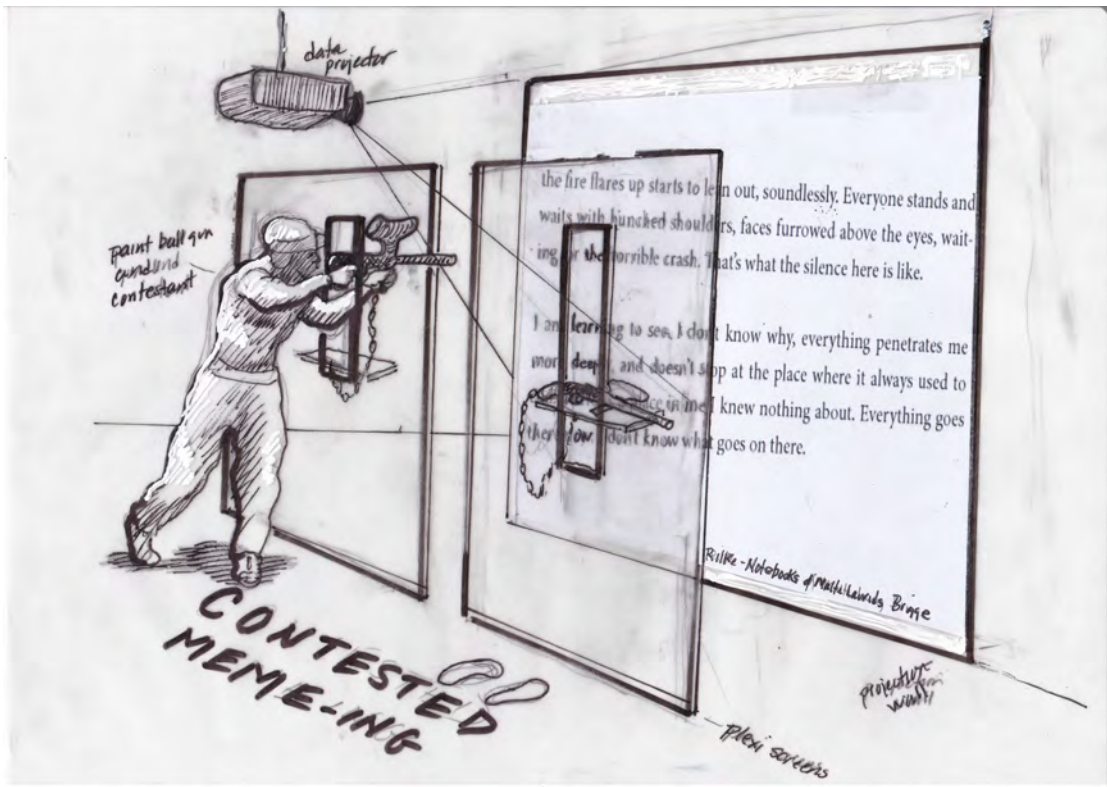
Video displays. Along the side wall a screen display video of texts being created in this fashion. Some video show single shooters constructing a new text, other videos show two players working together or against each other to vie for the emergent meaning they prefer to bring out of the text.

The Texts will be selected from a range of sources from mundane texts (encyclopedia entries, obscure novels) to classic texts from literature or music lyrics to highly provocative political or religious texts such as the Bible or the Koran, or the US Bills of Rights, the Australian constitution or the discriminatory language act. The selection can be inflammatory, critical, ironic or self-reflective.

Library & co-activity. In the exhibition space- some of the library of fixed books can be displayed on one side with numerous second hand books available for fixing on the other side.

See material list and technical requirements below after the Sources for:

CONTESTED MEME-ING: CO-OPT OR COOPERATE



the fire flares up starts to lean out, soundlessly. Everyone stands and waits with hunched shoulders, faces furrowed above the eyes, waiting for the horrible crash. That's what the silence here is like.

I am learning to see. I don't know why, everything penetrates me more deeply, and doesn't stop at the place where it always used to end. There is a place in me I knew nothing about. Everything goes there now. I don't know what goes on there.

Sample projection text from *The Notebooks of Malte Laurdis Brigge* – Rilke, page 3 (first published in 1910)

CONCLUSION

co-opt / Co-op / ... co-emerge / co-lapse / co-labour

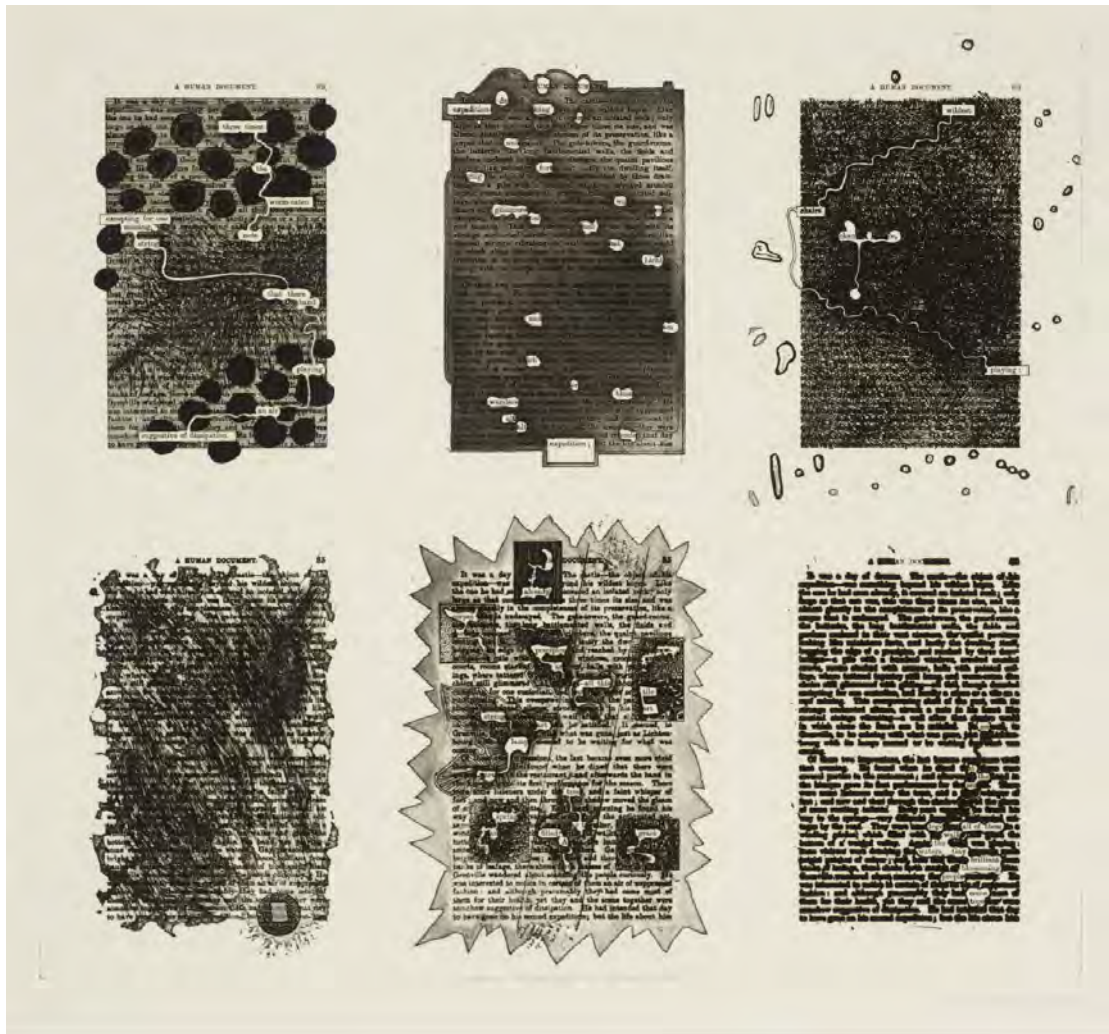
The test will be whether a provocative text can be contested, that is, texted together or whether conflict will prevail. The contestants have the option to override, overshoot their co-contestant positioning that person as the opposition / rival –or they can form an alliance, resolve the conflict and cooperate towards an explicit co-determined plan or towards an non-combative emergent text...

The video documentation will “capture” the development and resulting texts. The video documents will show the performative manner or style in which the texts developed and the failures and successes of coherence in the midst of failures of successes of imposition, domination, cooperation, collaboration, or play.

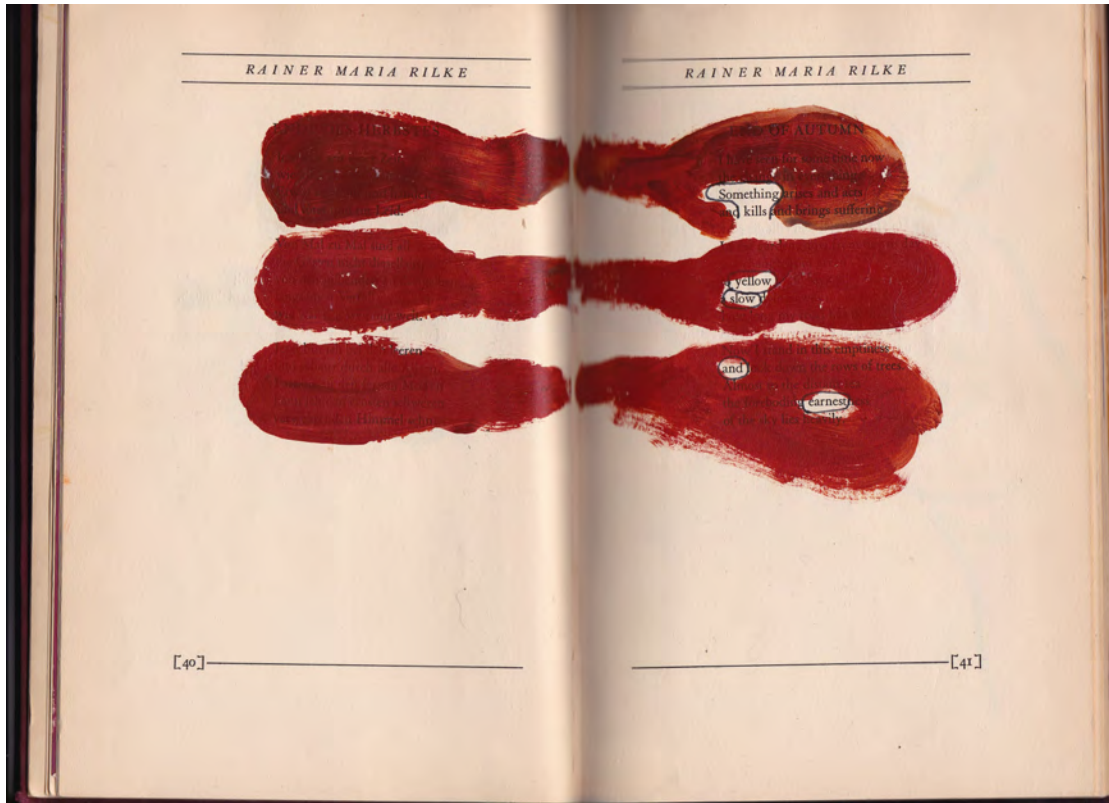
Program: the installation will have activated and archive mode. The video will capture the events of contested meme-ing and play back the event for viewers when the installation is not active.

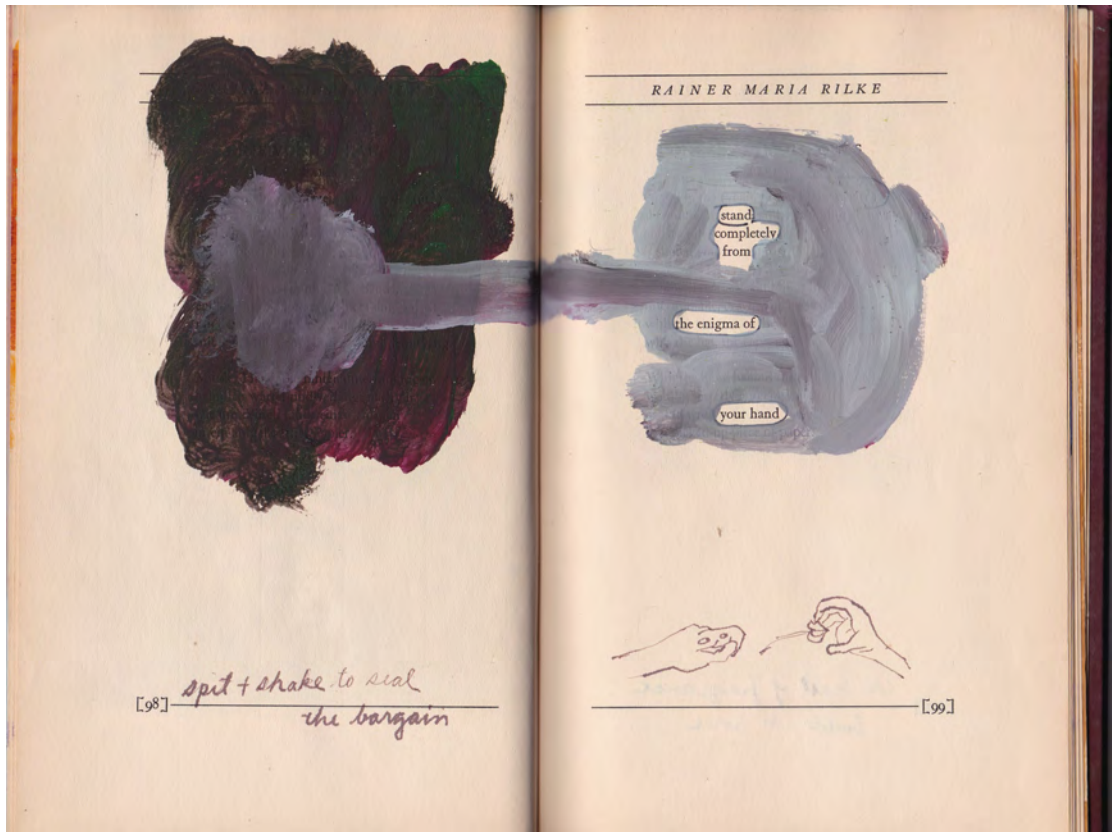
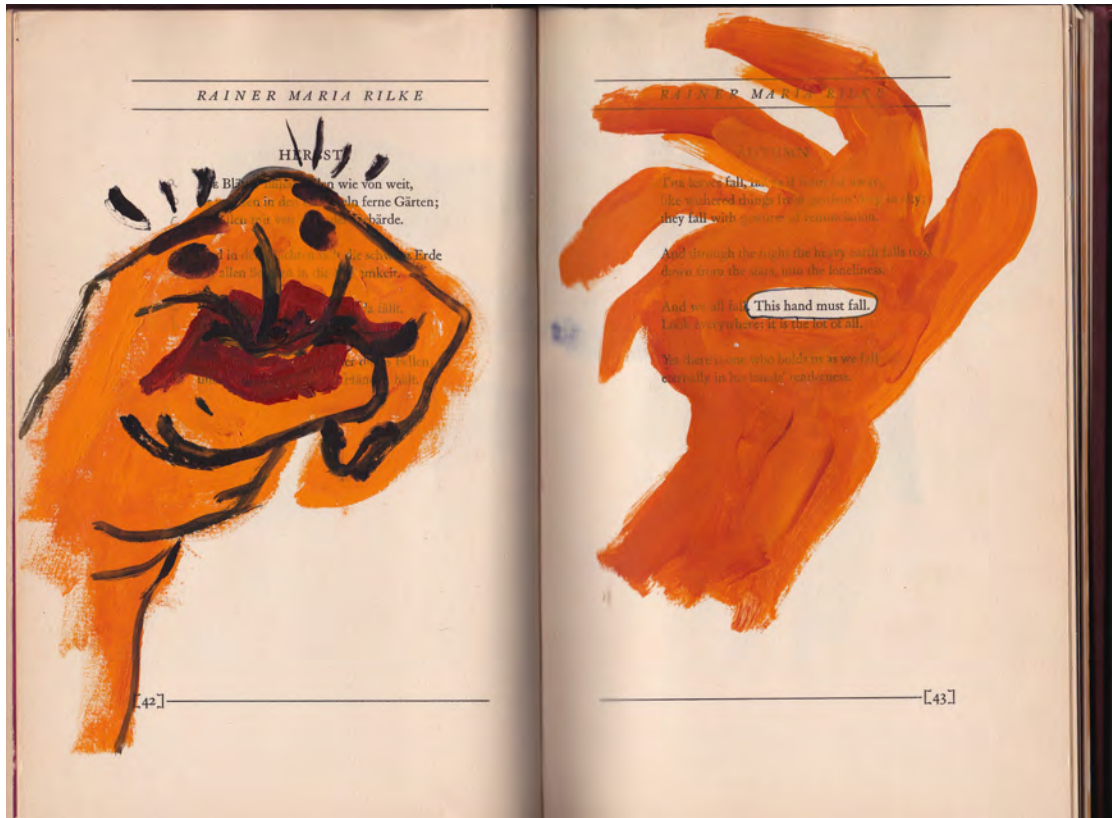
Publication: a subsequent publication might involve inviting researcher-practitioners, scholars historians, theorists to discuss the selected texts and the contested texts.

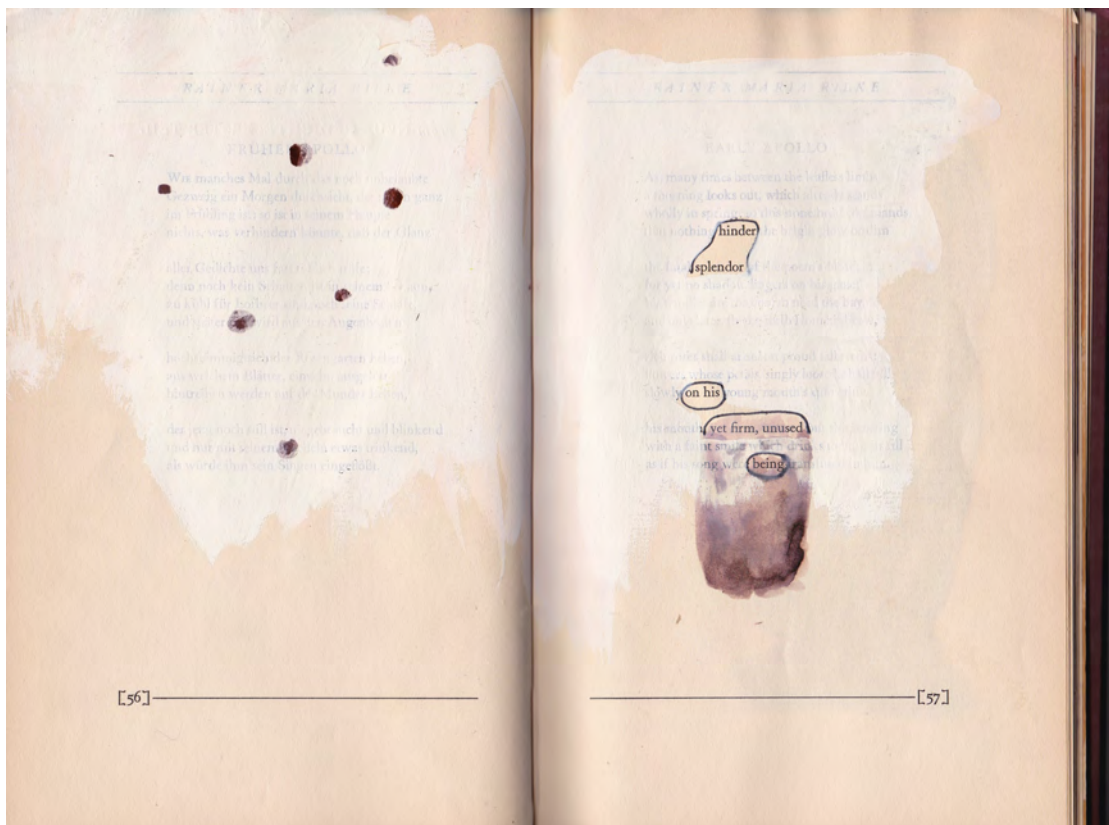
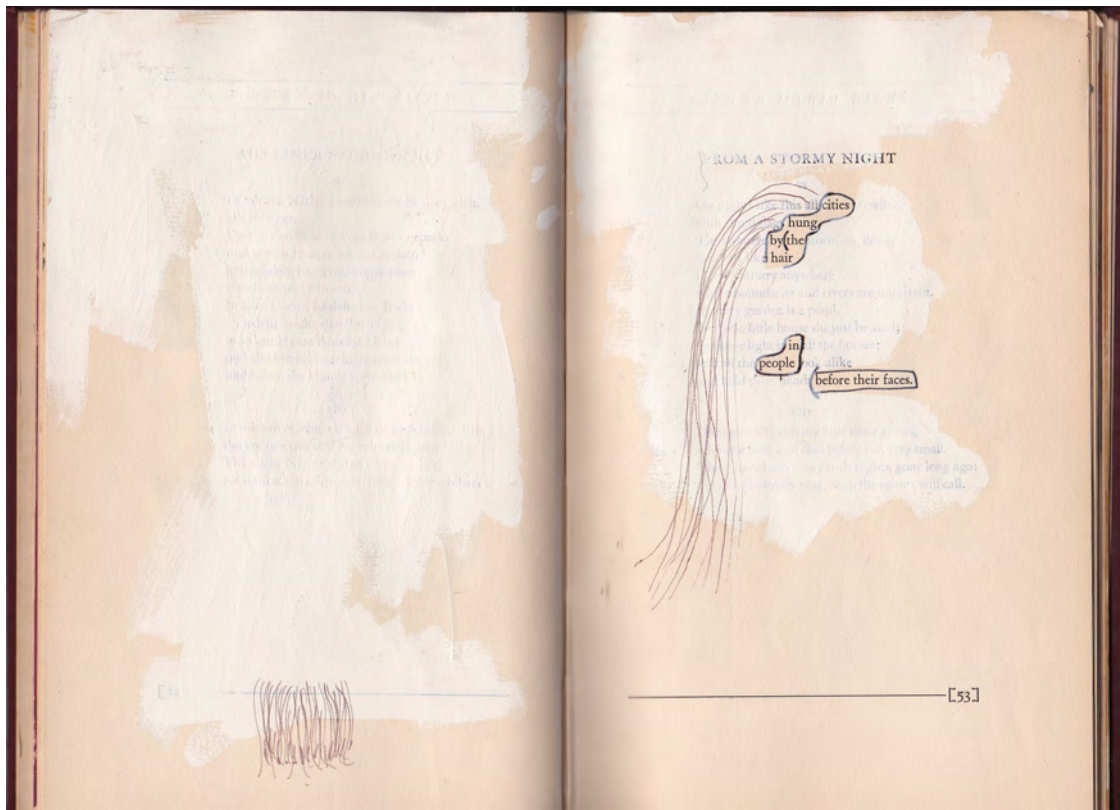
SOURCES:
Tom Phillips - *A Humument* 1970

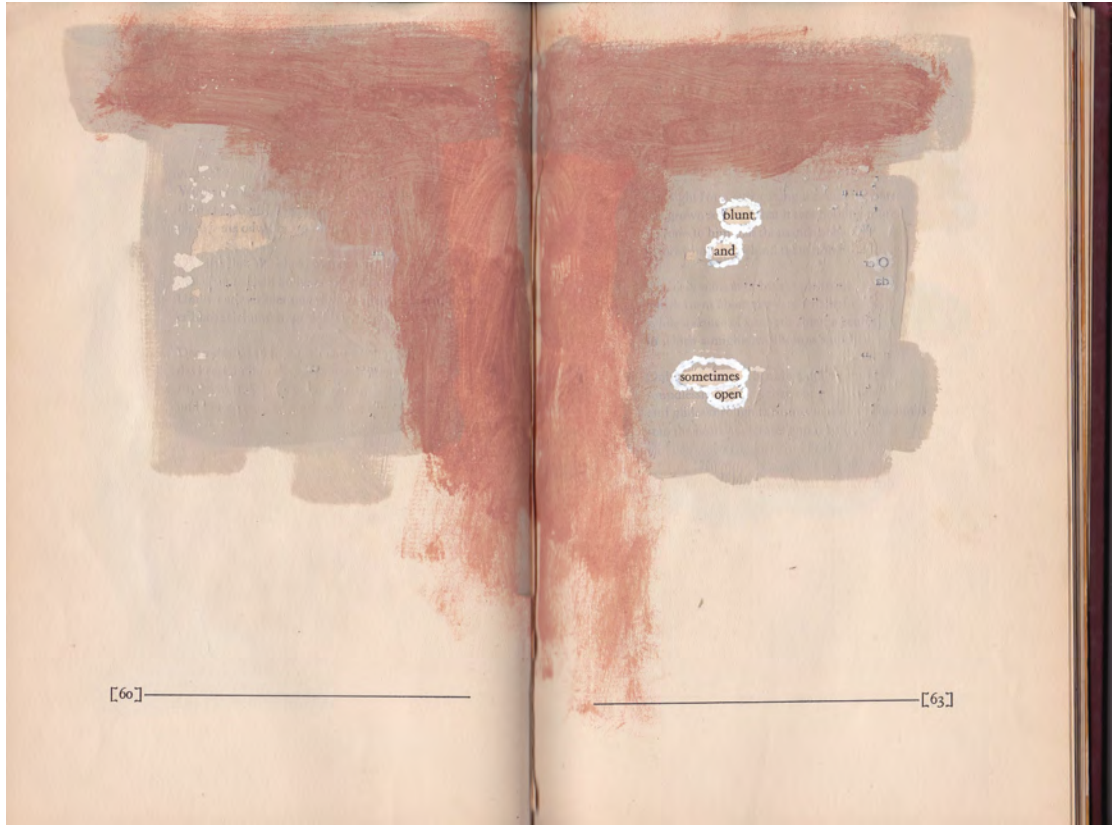


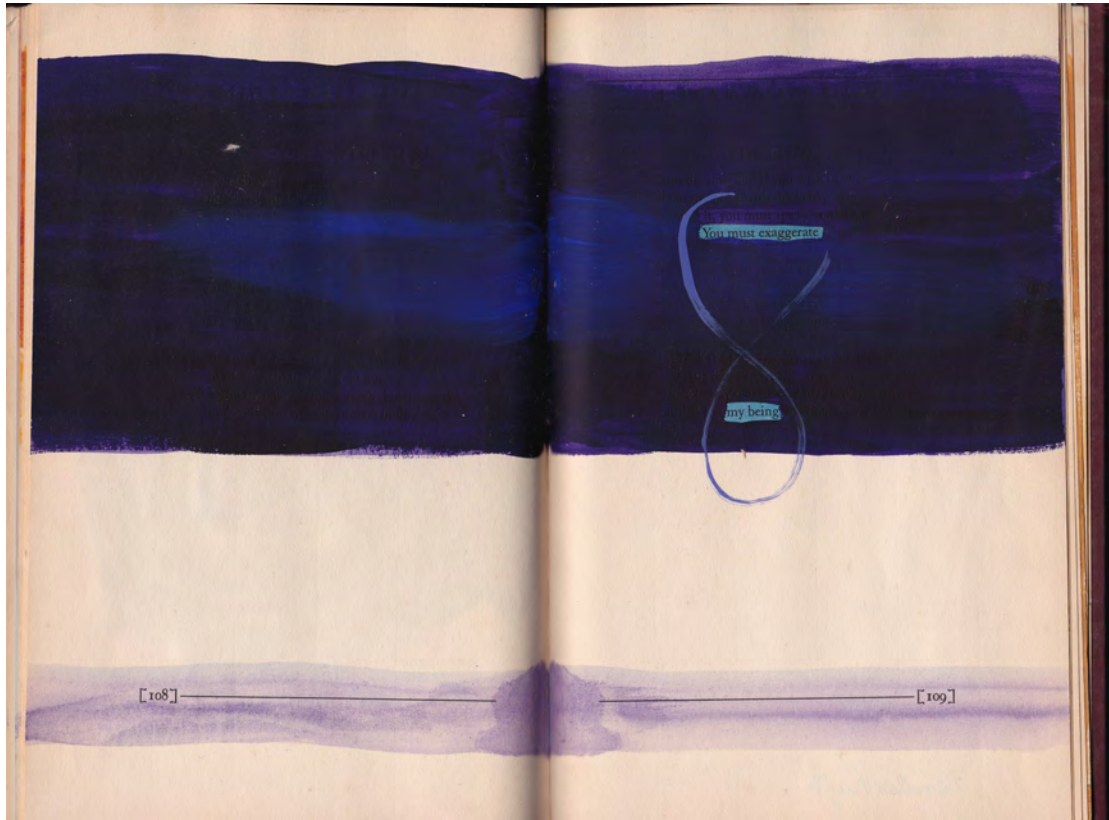
Jondi Keane –artist book- *Fixations on Rilke* (1986)
[One of fifty books in the library of fixations]











Technical and Labour Requirements

- Exhibition space with walls conducive for projection and be painted (wall will be returned to original state and colour).
- Plexi-glass / Perspex screens – depending of the space of installation they can be designed to hang from the ceiling or concertina in a free-standing structure.
- Two Paint ball guns and black and white paint balls (rent or buy paint ball guns) purchase of paint ball supply for x number of days or hours (to constraints of budget)
- Locking system to tether guns to panels.
- Data projector
- Optional – to be decided -- Black and white wall paint to clean up wall when paint ball splatters obscure texts too much> might not be necessary.
- Video compiler /editor - person, computer and software (to edit together the days rushes onto a document for viewing).
- Invitations to prominent person for an evening of contested meme-ing
- Assistance in installing and demounting installation (depending on duration of exhibit and bump-in/ bump out time period).

Budget

- Plexi-glass / Acrylic sheets plus construction and hardware for hanging = \$2000
- Rental or purchase of paint balls guns and paintballs. This might be the hidden cost of the project.
- Labour for video compiling and editing to be negotiated with festival organizers or to be arranged by artist.
- Data projector (supplied by festival or Swinburne? Or provided by artist or in kind contribution by Deakin?)