

# UbuWeb

<http://www.ubu.com/>

Concrete poetry's utopian pan-internationalist bent was clearly articulated by Max Bense in 1965 when he stated, "...concrete poetry does not separate languages; it unites them; it combines them. It is this part of its linguistic intention that makes concrete poetry the first international poetical movement." Its ideogrammatic self-contained, exportable, universally accessible content mirrors the utopian pan-linguistic dreams of cross-platform efforts on today's Internet; Adobe's PDF (portable document format) and Sun System's Java programming language each strive for similarly universal comprehension. The pioneers of concrete poetry could only dream of the now-standard tools used to make language move and morph, stream and scream, distributed worldwide instantaneously at little cost.

Essentially a gift economy, poetry is the perfect space to practice utopian politics. Freed from profit-making constraints or cumbersome fabrication considerations, information can literally "be free": on UbuWeb, we give it away and have been doing so since 1996. We publish in full color for pennies. We receive submissions Monday morning and publish them Monday afternoon. UbuWeb's work never goes "out of print." UbuWeb is a never-ending work in progress: many hands are continually building it on many platforms.

UbuWeb has no need for money, funding or backers. Our web space is provided by an alliance of interests sympathetic to our vision. Donors with an excess of bandwidth contribute to our cause. All labour and editorial work is voluntary; no money changes hands. Totally independent from institutional support, UbuWeb is free from academic bureaucracy and its attendant infighting, which often results in compromised solutions; we have no one to please but ourselves.

UbuWeb posts much of its content without permission; we rip out-of-print LPs into sound files; we scan as many old books as we can get our hands on; we post essays as fast as we can OCR them. UbuWeb is an unlimited resource with unlimited space to fill. It is in this way that the site has grown to encompass hundreds of artists, hundreds of gigabytes of sound files, books, texts and videos.

Sounds like a marginal situation? Hardly. We've won many prestigious internet awards and are acknowledged web-wide as the definitive source for Visual, Concrete + Sound Poetry. UbuWeb is on the syllabus of countless schools; we've gotten queries from Ph.D. candidates seeking information to third-graders researching a paper on concrete poetry. UbuWeb embodies an unstable community, neither vertical nor horizontal but rather a Deleuzian nomadic model: a 4-dimensional space simultaneously expanding and contracting in every direction, growing "rhizomatically" with ever-increasing unpredictability and uncanniness.

*How do I purchase something from your site?*

You can't. Nothing is for sale on UbuWeb.

It's all free.

We know it's a hard idea to get used to, but there's no lush gift shop waiting for you at the end of this museum.

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