

# In prospettiva rovesciata

Scritti in onore  
di Nicoletta Misler

*a cura di*  
Silvia Burini  
Giulia Gelmi

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2.

La Madre dice al Signore trafitto:  
“Tu sei mio figlio oppure il mio Dio?  
Lassù, sulla tua croce ribadito –  
posso forse lasciarti così, io?”

Credi che possa mai sopportarne  
l'orrore, il petto mio e tuo svuotato?  
Tu che sei stato carne di mia carne,  
tu che oramai sei spirito esalato...”

Cristo risponde in un filo di tono:  
“Ch'io sia natura viva oppure morta,  
che differenza fa? Comunque sono  
tuo figlio e Dio, madre. Cosa importa!”

## Hands Writing Shadows.

Elizaveta Mnatsakanova and Ketty La Rocca

Valentina Parisi

“...the moment when a mammal turned up  
with its hand miraculously feathered by a fountain pen.”  
Wisława Szymborska

In “La *préhension persécutrice*”, a paragraph from Maurice Blanchot’s study, *L’espace littéraire*, the author evoked a complex dialectic between the hands of a writer so as to visualize the human commitment to writing conceived as an everlasting obsession. Namely, Blanchot distinguished between the writing hand, which “won’t release” the pencil it is holding, “no matter how badly he wants to let it go” and the “other” hand, which “doesn’t write and is capable of intervening at the right moment to seize the pencil and put it aside”<sup>1</sup>. This difference is not only operational, but also qualitative: in Blanchot’s eyes the writing hand is “sick”, i.e. possessed by a kind of inertia. It “experiences, at certain moments, a very great need to seize: it must grasp the pencil, it has to. It receives an order, an imperious command”<sup>2</sup>. This “tyrannical prehension”<sup>3</sup> is nothing but a metaphor for the writer’s illusion to master the word (and the world):

“The writer seems to be the master of his pen; he can become capable of great mastery over words and over what he wants to make them express. But his mastery only succeeds in putting him, keeping him, in contact with the fundamental passivity where the word, no longer anything but its appearance – the shadow of a word – never can be mastered or even grasped. It remains the ungraspable which is also unreleasable: the indecisive moment of fascination<sup>4</sup>.”

Consequently, the writer’s mastery “is not in the hand that writes, the ‘sick’ hand that never lets the pencil go – that can’t let it go because what it holds it doesn’t really hold; what it holds belongs to the realm of shadows, and it is itself a shade”<sup>5</sup>; rather, it consists in the power to stop writing, to interrupt what is being written, to restore to the present instant its rights.

In Blanchot’s terms, the writer cannot give up writing because he is nostalgic about the world before nomination – because names remove the thing from its concrete and tangible existence in favor of an abstract and general

meaning. While common language is fully satisfied with nomination, literary language is not; writers wonder how to rediscover in language what precedes language and is denied by it. Consequently, the hand which writes withdraws “language from the course of the world”<sup>6</sup>, it detaches it “from what makes it a power”<sup>7</sup>. But what is more important, in Blanchot’s eyes, writing is intrinsically *handwriting*, i.e. a handiwork, or, rather, the work of a precise hand which “moves in a tempo which is scarcely human: not that of viable action, not that of hope either, but rather the shadow of time, the hand being itself the shadow of a hand slipping ghostlike toward an object that has become its own shadow”<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, while involved in the task of handwriting, hands are not equal: the one that suspends this world by writing never touches or grasps anything, since it is the shadow of a hand, while the other one suspends the writer’s illusion of going beyond nomination by forcibly releasing the “sick” hand from his inertia.

Blanchot’s depiction of writing as a handiwork evokes Martin Heidegger and his reflections on the “increasing destruction of the word”<sup>9</sup> provoked by the mechanization of writing. It is a documented fact that, throughout his life, Heidegger not only wrote exclusively, by hand, but also in a particular cursive script called Sütterlin, named after the Prussian Minister of Culture Ludwig Sütterlin, who invented it in 1911. Recalling his meeting with Heidegger in the early 1970s, his American translator David Farrell Krell wrote: “I admired him – at age eighty-five – for both his handwriting and his writing posture”<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that, when in 1983 the magazine *L’Herne* issued a monographic issue devoted to the German philosopher, for the cover the editors chose a photograph of him holding a pen with both hands above a manuscript (fig. 1). Taking inspiration from this image, Jacques Derrida wrote an essay, “Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s Hands,” where he declared that the “play and the theater of hands” in Heidegger’s pictures (which he had collected with such enthusiasm) “would merit a whole seminar”<sup>11</sup>.

If we limit ourselves to the photograph published in *L’Herne*, it becomes evident that Heidegger’s hands are not the dissociated hands of Blanchot’s essay. Rather, they are hands proudly united in their invincible repulsion for the tool that has mechanized and standardized writing, i.e. the typewriter. It is no accident that, with his reflections on the degradation of thinking provoked by the typewriter, Heidegger became the most authoritative reference for all theorists conceptualizing technological shifts in the 20th century, from Vilhelm Flusser to Friedrich Kittler to Byung Chul Han.

The first time Heidegger deplored the “irruption of the mechanism in the realm of the word”<sup>12</sup> was in 1942-43, while delivering a course on Parmenides at the University of Freiburg. This connection between Parmenides and the typewriter is only apparently bizarre, because, according to Heidegger, Parmenides and the Presocratics lived in times when “truth was unveiled and

the human connected to the world”<sup>13</sup>, whereas the history of technology, according to the German philosopher, confronts us with a concealment of truth, which goes along with the mechanization of writing. Hence, he warned his students about the dangers connected with typing: “Mechanical writing deprives the hand of its rank in the realm of the written word and degrades word to a means of communication [...] it conceals the handwriting and thereby the character. The typewriter makes everyone look the same”<sup>14</sup>.

Interestingly enough, while attacking typing, Heidegger lamented not only a loss of individuality, but also a deprivation of the fundamental (etymological) basis of human speech inasmuch as typing suppresses the ligaments connecting the letters and disintegrates them into autonomous entities. Such a fact is at odds with the idea inherent in the Greek word for “speaking”, i.e. *legein*, meaning “to speak”, but also “to collect” and “to tie”.

But what disturbed Heidegger, in particular, is that in typewriting the process of writing is no longer placed under the joint control of the hand and the eye. The written word is no longer visible or, rather, is “concealed”, or “dissimulated”: “Die Schreibmaschine verhüllt das Wesen des Schreibens und der Schrift” (“the typewriter would dissimulate the very essence of the writing gesture and of writing”)<sup>15</sup>.

As Friedrich Kittler remarked, the first models of typewriters did not allow any immediate visual control of the output. In the Remington, it was necessary to lift a cover to check what was written, while in the case of another typewriter, the Malling Hansen, the very hemispherical structure of the keyboard prevented a view of the paper. In other words, after the invention of the typewriter the act of writing stopped being an act of reading; writing became a blind activity<sup>16</sup>, which is not surprising, considering that early typewriters were constructed for the needs of blind people. This diversion of the written sign from the control of the hand and the eye was also observed by Angelo Beyerlen, the first typewriter dealer of the German Reich: “In writing by hand, the eye must constantly watch the written line and only that. It must attend to the creation of each sign, must measure, direct, and, in short, guide the hand through each movement”<sup>17</sup>. In mechanical writing, by contrast, “after one briefly presses down on a key, the typewriter creates – in the proper position on the paper – a complete letter, which is not only untouched by the writer’s hand, but also located in a place entirely apart from there the hands work”<sup>18</sup>.

However, what is more important is that, according to Heidegger, the disruption of the interplay of hand and eye in typing affects our way of thinking and our possibility to transmit the truth: in *What Is Called Thinking?* (a collection of lectures he delivered in Freiburg in 1951 and 1952), Heidegger defines the hand as a thinking organ which set the human being apart from the rest of nature. *Hands think*, because they are an organ of signing. Thinking is not a disembodied, cerebral process, but is a *Handwerk*, a work of the hand, a pro-

cess of creative engagement with the world. Conversely, the image of the hand is a sign, a substitute for thinking, i.e. the very activity which distinguishes humans from animals. As Heidegger wrote: “Apes, too, have organs that can grasp, but they do not have hands<sup>19</sup>. The hand is infinitely different from all grasping organs “different by an abyss of essence”<sup>20</sup>. Humans have hands that do more than grasping, because the hand:

“reaches and extends, receives and welcomes and not just things: the hand extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. The hand holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a sign. Two hands fold into one, a gesture meant to carry man into the great oneness. The hand is all this [...] Every motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself in that element. All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking. Therefore, thinking itself is man’s simplest handiwork<sup>21</sup>.”

While commenting on this fragment, Derrida emphasized a crucial aspect: for Heidegger the *Handwerk* of thinking consists not so much in *ergreifen*, that is taking and grasping, as in *geben* (giving):

“The being of the hand cannot be determined as a bodily organ of grasping. [...] If there is a thought of the hand or a hand of thought, as Heidegger suggests, it is not of the order of conceptual grasping. It belongs rather to the essence of the *gift*, of a donation that would give, if possible, without taking anything<sup>22</sup>.”

According to Derrida, the immediate expression of the relationship between hand and thought is the written word – the script, understood as the gift of the hand: “If the hand of man is what it is from speech, or from the word, the [...] most original manifestation of this origin will be the gesture of the hand to make the word manifest, to wit, handwriting, manuscripture”<sup>23</sup>.

Heidegger’s giving hand, that “shows and inscribes the word for the gaze”<sup>24</sup>, and Blanchot’s obsessively grasping hand, incapable of releasing the pencil, are certainly different in their attitudes. However, both philosophers agree in locating the origin of language into the flesh of the human body. For this reason, their writings resonate with the practices of artists who reacted to the increasing marginalization of hand-script by reintegrating the bodily presence of the hand in their works, or otherwise reflected over the possibility of the hand to be a pre-linguistic carrier of meaning.

It is difficult to ascertain whether Elizaveta Mnatsakanova (Baku, 1922–Vienna, 2019) and Ketty La Rocca (alias Gaetana La Rocca, La Spezia, 1938 –

Florence, 1976) ever read Heidegger or Blanchot. Certainly, the works of these two poets and artists can be interpreted in the framework of the theories enunciated by the two philosophers, and, especially, in the light of Blanchot’s meditation over the contiguity between writing and dying.

According to both women, writing, far from having the book as its goal and a final result, is a constant re-writing, which happens “at death’s door”, to quote the title of Mnatsakanova’s multilingual poem *U smerti v gostiakh - Beim Tode zu Gast*. Death seems to have affected the creative trajectories of both artists, belonging to different generations and contexts. Mnatsakanova destroyed all her manuscripts dated earlier than 1971, the year when she experienced clinical death in Moscow. The poem inspired by that event, *Osen’ v lazarete nev-innykh sestër*, was the first one to be acknowledged by the author as a work of her own, although it was written almost at the age of 50. It was also the first text which she published after moving to Vienna in 1975<sup>25</sup>. In turn, La Rocca was diagnosed with cancer in 1966 at the age of 28; and, as a consequence, the possibility of dying overshadowed all her later production, which developed in a conceptual perspective far from her initial involvement in visual poetry and collage as a member of the Florentine neo-avant-garde Gruppo 70 (Eugenio Miccini, Lamberto Pignotti, Luciano Ori, and Lucia Marcucci).

Another significant fact is that both poets shared a musical background. After moving to Florence, La Rocca completed her studies at the Luigi Cherubini Conservatory in the 1960s, attending the electronic music courses held by Pietro Grossi – whereas Mnatsakanova graduated in piano and composition at Moscow Conservatory, where she was a pupil of Dmitrii Shostakovich. Musical techniques re-elaborated in Mnatsakanova’s poetry have already become the subject of scholarly analysis: according to Ol’ga Sokolova and Vladimir Feshchenko, for example, Mnatsakanova’s work belongs to a “zone of dynamic transition from music to words [...] and from musical thinking to poetic thinking”<sup>26</sup>. The poet not only conceived most of her poems as a score<sup>27</sup>, but she also insisted on the intentional manuscript status of her poetry. As a matter of fact, Mnatsakanova was much more committed to *samizdat* than other unprinted authors of her time. As she already lived in Vienna and no longer had to worry about censorship, she decided to self-publish her own work and created small run books conceived as a reprint of her own manuscripts, doing so merely out of esthetic considerations, because, according to her, printing “has killed the creative process”:

“Indeed, printing may be a good thing, but it has greatly harmed the creative process [...] For some reason, poets in Russia were very keen to be published in print and fought hard for it... But for me, it was awful. When I looked at books while I was still living in Moscow, I thought, “My God, I hope not...” I don’t want books like that.

I was surprised that so-called great poets dreamed of this. It means death. They dreamed of being published. I don't understand why. I never understood it<sup>28</sup>.”

Additionally, in the early 1980s the image of Mnatsakanova's own hands became a recurrent iconographic motif in her books. More specifically, she reintegrated the bodily presence of the hand into the very production of her books, by revisiting a specific tool of mechanical reproduction, i.e. the xerox machine. In texts such as *Aleksei Mikhailovich russkikh snovidenii* (inspired by Aleksei Remizov and included by Konstantin Kuz'minsky in his anthology)<sup>29</sup> and in the above-mentioned *U smerti v gostiakh* (fig. 2), Mnatsakanova photocopied her manuscripts and, simultaneously, her own hands; in so doing, she created peculiar effects of juxtaposition and interaction between the handwritten text and the writing hand. Here, as Stephanie Sandler has remarked, the xerox machine stops being used as a simple tool for producing copies of a text – as it was the rule in *samizdat* – and becomes involved in the creative process itself<sup>30</sup>.

Sandler retells Mnatsakanova's story of having accidentally photocopied her own hand along with her own texts<sup>31</sup>. This could well have been the case; and, in any case, the non-deliberate supra-impression of the hand over the page soon evolved into more aestheticized and sophisticated images of hands hiding the text and making it illegible, or even “performing” the text-score, as if the hands of a musical conductor – surely, no coincidence that the Austrian film director Florian Kogler, in shooting his documentary film, *Das Buch Sabeth* [Sabeth's Book], paid so much attention to the hands of the elderly poet, because she inserted them – literally – into her manuscripts (fig. 3).

The motif of the hand became ever more complex over the years, as Mnatsakanova turned towards photography. Indeed, the connection between calligraphy and mechanical reproduction was crucial for her as well as, as we shall see, for La Rocca. Thanks to photography, but, contrary to the Italian artist, Mnatsakanova re-shaped the image of herself as a “handwriting woman” according to famous and well recognizable iconographic models – such as the page from *Das Hohelied*, inspired, presumably, by Parmigianino's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* – a clear reference for someone like Mnatsakanova who had adopted Vienna as her home, given that this painting was (and is) on display at the Kunsthistorisches Museum.

At the same time and curiously enough, while holding a pen on a black background, Mnatsakanova's hands resemble Heidegger's hands, as portrayed on the cover of the *L'Herne*. They are “thinking hands”, captured in the act of producing the gift of poetry. To use Charles Peirce's terminology, the hand here becomes an “index of the poet's labor”<sup>32</sup>. Conversely, poetry is understood by Mnatsakanova as a *Handwerk*, i.e. as a work of the hand which, as Derrida asserted, shows and inscribes the word for the gaze.

As for La Rocca, her hands are not necessarily writing hands, as in Mnatsakanova's case, but, surely, thinking and speaking hands. As a rule, they are self-significant; they do not denote the capacity of the subject to write, but, rather, convey a message to be interpreted by the viewer. In effect, La Rocca was very interested in sign-language, even collaborating with Italian state television for the program *Nuovi alfabeti* (1973-1976) targeted at deaf-mutes. Language and writing were long part of her professional life: after all, she even earned a living as a primary school teacher, assigned to teach children handwriting. However, in her artistic practice, she was much more concerned with making visible the expressive potential of hands conceived as a communicative tool bypassing linguistic differentiation.

This is the leitmotif of her photographic book, *In principio erat*, dated 1971, the publication<sup>33</sup> marking an important turning-point in La Rocca's career: as Raffaella Perna emphasized, here “the artist no longer resorted to selecting and assembling images and writings taken from magazines [as in her collages of the 1960s, aiming at an ironical demystification of mass cultural production, V. P], but instead had herself photographed while performing gestures with her hands, focusing on the relationship between photography, the body and verbal language”<sup>34</sup>.

Curiously, the title resonates in a visual composition by Mnatsakanova, which also refers to the Gospel of John: “Und das Wort ist Fleisch geworden” (Gv 1, 14). Evidently, for Mnatsakanova the word became flesh every time the writing hand inscribed it on paper; the handwork of writing was seen as a mysterious act of incarnation of a meaning which, for eons, had repeated itself. In La Rocca's book, however, hands are rather a prehistoric and pre-linguistic tool for expression, for sign-language – and not the word – is what existed in the beginning. The title, therefore, refers to mythical times when communication was still conveyed by a universal language of gestures, perhaps echoing a fragment of *What is Thinking?*, where Heidegger writes: “But the hand's gestures run everywhere through language, in their perfect purity precisely when man speaks by being silent. And only when man speaks, does he think”<sup>35</sup>.

Consequently, the gesturing hand is a thinking hand. However, mankind has precipitated into the fragmentation and alienation of languages and, therefore, has lost the immediacy of signing. La Rocca's visual protest against the stereotypical language spoken by the mass media resonates with Heidegger's intuition according to which the word eradicated from the carnal realm of the hand is a hand poor in thinking. Indeed, the photographs in *In principio erat* are independent from the textual fragments with which they seem to be associated. These particular “captions” – taken from La Rocca's seminal text *Dal momento in cui qualsiasi* (1970) – as well as from Italian folk nursery rhymes – are totally nonsensical; they not only do not illustrate the gestures, but they do not even seem to make sense in themselves. If compared with the

expressive poignancy of hands, the “words appear absolutely empty, deprived of any communicative value”<sup>36</sup>. At the same time, La Rocca’s photographs do not refer to the “classical” Italian gestures which Bruno Munari collected in his famous *Supplement to the Italian dictionary* (1958)<sup>37</sup> – which is to say that La Rocca does not use gestures imbued with a specific, preordained meaning, but creates new situations where the hands can freely interact and communicate. As a result, her disillusionment with verbal language is counterbalanced by a faith in hands, or, rather, by a cautious optimism well expressed by Gillo Dorfles in his preface to the book. Of course, not only words, but gestures, too, “are first spontaneous, then stereotypical, and finally crystallized by tradition and usage”; however, he adds, “in the final hour, with the last gesture, it is possible that a new impulse animates the hands of man, of the dying, as it had animated those of the newborn, the infant, the non-speaking, who grasps with his hands, as he will then grasp with his mind once he has grown up.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1975, on the occasion of her one-woman show in Dortmund, La Rocca imposed a radical intervention upon her own book by reworking it according to the procedure employed in her *Riduzioni* (Reductions). In this extensive graphic cycle, dating back to 1971, the artist came to appropriate all kind of images – icons of pop culture, family pictures, as well as artworks made “invisible”<sup>39</sup> by their own pervasive presence in our visual imagination – and subjected them to an identical process of erasure. Namely, the basic outline of a photograph is traced by hand, using handwritten, barely legible or even illegible words. The outline is then traced again, the words replaced with a simple graphic line in differing weights, one thick and the other thin. The procedure “reduces” the original image to its most elementary form, the image now dissolved into the author’s bodily gesture of writing (fig. 4).

In the second edition of *In principio erat*<sup>40</sup> La Rocca obtains a similar effect by superimposing a semi-transparent sheet of paper to each page of the original Florence edition. Then she writes over both the outline of the gesticulating hands and the semantically opaque text of the “captions” so that the “conflict between words and images, between iconic signs and verbal signs, is visualised according to a process of mutual elision”<sup>41</sup>. Consequently, both verbal and non-verbal communication systems are equated in their incomprehensibility. The writing, orphaned of content, surrenders to its own linear beauty, dissolving into drawing. The only signifying element is the pronoun “you”, obsessively repeated in ink. On the one hand, the calligraphic writing obliterates Gutenbergian mechanical script and reaffirms the existence of the self; on the other hand, the “you” being a deictic, reshapes every sentence into an appeal, an invocation to an unspecified other.

The hand, therefore, is transformed into an “appendix for a supplication”, i.e. into *Appendice per una supplica* – the title which La Rocca gave to many of her works, including the silent video featuring a pair of gesticulating male

and female hands which she presented at the XXXVI Biennale di Venezia in 1972 in the section *Performance and videotape* curated by Gerry Schum. Titles migrate freely in La Rocca’s work – for example, the origin of this mesmerizing video (where hands perform an entire repertoire of possible meanings) can be situated in the visual composition, *Accumulazioni*, dated 1971<sup>42</sup>. Here, the artist juxtaposes a photograph of her own hand, its outline and a poem, first typed and then handwritten: “la nebbia si andava dileguando, il sole era già alto sull’orizzonte, le prime ombre della sera scendevano” (“the fog was lifting/the sun was already high on the horizon, the first shadows of evening were falling”).

La Rocca’s “accumulation” can be interpreted as a response to Beyerlen’s statement that the “typewriter dislocates the letter in a place entirely apart from where the hands work”. For in this composition she brings together the elements which the mechanization of writing has separated, namely the hand and the letters, and, in so doing, she creates a kind of meditation (*à la Kosuth*) on the different ontological levels of the elements displayed: a photograph of a hand touching the surface of the sheet and projecting its shadow thereupon; the outline of the same hand traced with a pen; and the text produced by the hand itself, both in its handwritten and in its typed version.

In turn, physical hands can become a surface for writing. In the photographic series *Le mie parole, e tu?* (1971) the hand – which is, in itself, an “appendix for a supplication”, an organ designed for appeal – is also inscribed with the pronoun “you”, which Charles Peirce defines as an index. La Rocca creates a complex image where hands are not only not indexing the existence of the other, but, moreover, fail to seek other hands (as in *In principio erat* and *Appendice per una supplica*), while still bearing the verbal expression of an aspiration to evoke the other.

In a poem dated 1972-73, *You, you*, La Rocca explains that such a “you” is also an alienated I: “‘you’ significa anche io, io non ho alternative, mi salvo nella mia stessa isteria, con l’irripetibile del mio scrivermi a mano / nel rendere microscopico il vivere l’altro da me / nell’essermi esempio di alienazione”<sup>43</sup>. To quote Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, La Rocca’s *you* is an index to the “nothingness that dissolves all things... the infinite presence of what remains radically absent, its presence always infinitely other, presence of the other in its alterity: non-presence”.<sup>44</sup>

The alienation of the subject into nothingness through writing is an anticipation of dying. In 1973 – i.e. less than three years before her death from a brain tumor in February, 1976 – La Rocca adopted the same technique used for *Riduzioni* in her perhaps most famous and certainly most dramatic cycle, *Craniologie*. Here the artist reworked the x-rays of her own skull by superimposing them on photographic images of hands printed on transparent supports, while inscribing the pronoun “you” in ink. Consequently, x-rays and photographs

merge to create images similar to double exposure photographs, whereas the x-ray image now becomes a support for the calligraphy (fig. 5). For both Mnatsakanova and La Rocca calligraphic writing was an act related to the shadow of death: in a letter to Gerald Janecek dated 12 May, 1997, Mnatsakanova, attempting to explain the “superhuman” automatism and precision of the script on certain pages of *U smerti v gostiakh*, wrote: “I felt as if death was guiding my hand”<sup>45</sup>. On the other hand, in *You, you* La Rocca defined “scrivere i contorni” (“writing the outlines”) as “the only possible sign”<sup>46</sup> for her, a kind of mechanical, neurotic operation which can be stopped (again, in Blanchotian terms) only with the disappearance of the writing subject itself. In *Craniologie* writing is nothing more than the inscription of one’s own handiwork in the ghostly negative of one’s own ephemeral body.

**1** M. Blanchot: *The Space of Literature*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982, p. 24.

**2** Ibid.

**3** As translated by Ann Smock from the French (“préhension persécutrice”), *ibid.*

**4** Ibid.

**5** Ibid.

**6** Ibid., p. 25.

**7** Ibid.

**8** Ibid., p. 24.

**9** J. Derrida: “Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s Hands” in J. Sallis, ed.: *Deconstruction and Philosophy. The Writings of Jacques Derrida*, Chicago-London: Chicago University Press, 1989, p. 180.

**10** Quoted from A. Lecznar: “Parmenides at his Typewriter: Nietzsche, Heidegger and the Media of Philosophy” in P. Michelaki, ed.: *Classics and Media Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 285. Compare D. F. Krell’s recollections: “He [Heidegger] returned to his writing. He held the pen without crooking his index finger; the book he was inscribing also lay at the proper angle. He would have been a perfect model for penmanship classes. Heidegger took a long time to write, although he seemed to write without any difficulty. His script proved to be neat and firm, quite legible. Hands small and

delicate” in D. F. Krell: *Three Encounters. Heidegger, Arendt, Derrida*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 50-51.

**11** Derrida, “Geschlecht II”, p. 169.

**12** Quoted from F. Kittler: *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 199.

**13** Lecznar, “Parmenides at his Typewriter,” p. 283.

**14** Quoted from Kittler, *Gramophone*, p. 199. Didier Franck uses even stronger terms: “La machine à écrire extirpe le mot, rapport de l’être à l’homme, du domaine charnel de la main” in D. Franck: *Heidegger et le problème de l’espace*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1986, p. 102.

**15** Derrida, “Geschlecht II”, p. 179.

**16** Writing becoming a blind activity was welcomed – with much relief – by Friedrich Nietzsche. Being almost blind in his right eye and suffering from excruciating headaches, in 1881 Nietzsche bought a typewriter so as to regain full writing ability. After a week of practice with his Malling Hansen, “the ‘first mechanized philosopher’ noticed that the eyes no longer had to do their job, acknowledging soon after, in a letter dated 1882, that ‘Our working tools are also working on our thoughts’. He did not clarify what he meant; although we might assume that he had observed an effect

similar to that reported by early typists, i.e. a loosening of conscious control over writing. Compare Kittler, *Gramophone*, pp. 202-03.

**17** Quoted from Kittler, *Gramophone*, p. 203.

**18** Ibid.

**19** M. Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, New York: Harper & Row, 1968, p. 16.

**20** Ibid.

**21** Ibid., pp. 16-17.

**22** Derrida, “Geschlecht II”, pp. 172-73.

**23** Ibid., p. 178.

**24** Ibid.

**25** E. Mnatsakanova: “Osen’ v lazarete nevinnykh sestër. Rekviem v semi chastiakh” in M. Chemiakin et al.: *Apollon-77*, Paris: Arts Graphiques, 1977, pp. 173-80.

**26** O. Sokolova; V. Feshchenko: “‘Spaces of Silence’ and ‘Secret Music of the Word’: Verbo-Musical Minimalism in the Poetry of Gennady Aygi and Elizaveta Mnatsakanova” in *Arts*, Basel, 2024, No. 13, p. 5. See also: G.J. Janecek: “Paronomastic and Musical Techniques in Mnatsakanova’s ‘Rekviem’” in *Slavic and East European Journal*, Tucson, 1987, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 202-19.

**27** In particular, her *Rekviem*. See E. Mnatsakanova: “Osen’ v lazarete nevinnykh sestër. Rekviem v semi chastiakh (1971-1988-2003)” in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, Moscow, 2003, No. 62: <https://magazines.gorky.media/nlo/2003/4/osen-v-lazarete-nevinnyh-sester.html>

**28** E. Mnatsakanova: “Ya vseгда delala vse kak-to po-drugomu” in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 1998, No. 33, p. 304.

**29** E. Netzkowa (Mnatsakanova): “Aleksii Mikhailovich russkikh snovidenii. Kratkaia povest’ v slovakh, i v slezakh, i v poklonakh” in K. Kuz’minsky, comp.: *Antologiya noveishei russkoi poezii u Goluboi laguny*, Newtonville; Oriental Research Partners, 1983, Vol. 2A: <https://www.kkk-bluelagoon.ru/tom2a/mnatsakanova.htm>. Mnatsakanova adopted the pseudonym Netzkowa after moving to Vienna. Remizov’s own passion for calligraphy should be noted here.

**30** S. Sandler: “Arkhivnaia poetika Elizavety Mnatsakanovoi” in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 1998, No. 33, p. 262.

**31** S. Sandler: “Visual Poetry after Modernism: Elizaveta Mnatsakanova” in *Slavic Review*, Cambridge, Mass., 2007, No. 67, p. 633.

**32** Ibid.

**33** K. La Rocca: *In principio erat*, Florence: Centro Di Edizioni, 1971.

**34** “...l’artista non ricorre più al prelievo e al montaggio di immagini e scritte tratte dai rotocalchi, ma si fa ritrarre mentre compie gesti con le mani, concentrandosi sulla relazione tra fotografia, corpo e linguaggio verbale”: R. Perna: “Da *In principio erat* alle *Craniologie*. Ketty La Rocca e la fotografia” in Francesca Gallo; Raffaella Perna, eds.: *La Rocca. Nuovi studi*, Milan, Postmedia Books, 2015, p. 71

**35** Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, p. 16.

**36** “...le parole appaiono assolutamente vuote, prive di valore comunicativo”: R. Moratti: “Note sulla produzione poetica di Ketty La Rocca” in Lucilla Saccà, ed.: *Omaggio a Ketty La Rocca*, Pisa, Pacini, 2001, p. 178.

**37** B. Munari: *Supplemento al dizionario italiano*, Turin: Carpano, 1958.

**38** G. Dorfles in K. La Rocca: *In principio erat*, unpaginated.

**39** Compare “Il *David*, per esempio, non esiste più, quello vero è quello delle cartoline [...] eppure è per questo che è così misterioso e se io voglio un *David* tutto per me posso solo rifarmelo, costruirlo per i miei ricordi, su misura del mio modo di essere, di sentire, di vivere” in Saccà, *Omaggio a Ketty La Rocca*, p. 109.

**40** K. La Rocca: *In principio erat*, Dortmund, Museum am Ostwald, 1975.

**41** “...il conflitto tra parole e immagini, tra segno iconico e segno verbale si visualizza secondo un processo di elisione reciproca” in Saccà, *Omaggio a Ketty La Rocca*, p. 109.

**42** “Accumulazioni” is also the title of La Rocca’s one-woman exhibition at the Galleria Flori, Florence, the same year.

**43** K. La Rocca: “You, you” in L. Vergine: *Il corpo come linguaggio (la Body Art e storie simili)*, Milan: Prearo, 1974, 2000 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition); p. 131.

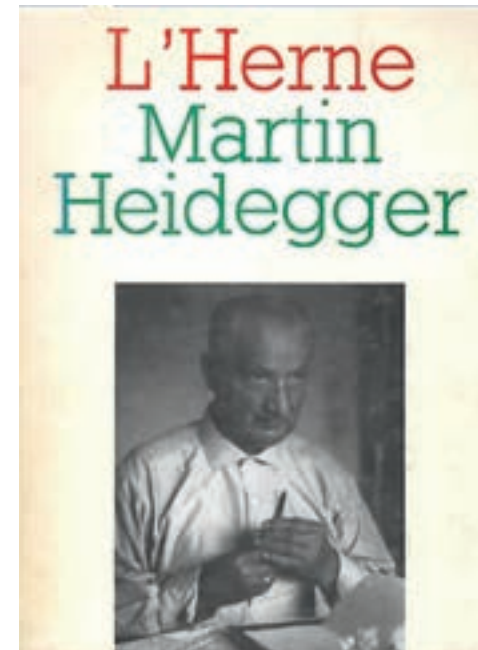
**44** G.W.F. Hegel: *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press: Clarendon Press, 1979, p. 38.

**45** Quoted from T. Nazarenko: “Zametki na chërnykh poliakh: vizual’naia semantika knigi Elizavety Mnatsakanovoi ‘U smerti v gostiakh’” in *Chernovik*, New York, 2000, No. 15: [https://smeshtchernov.narod.ru/avangard/nmbr15/avtor15\\_6.htm](https://smeshtchernov.narod.ru/avangard/nmbr15/avtor15_6.htm)

**46** La Rocca, “You, you”.



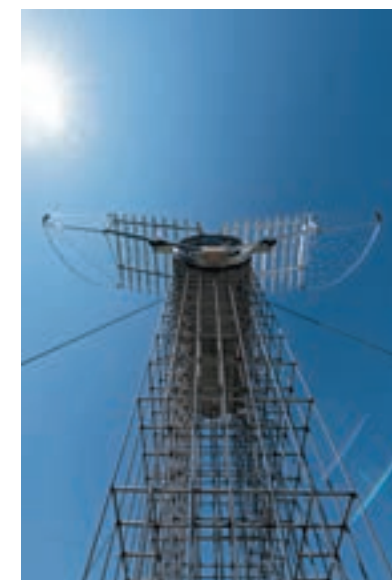
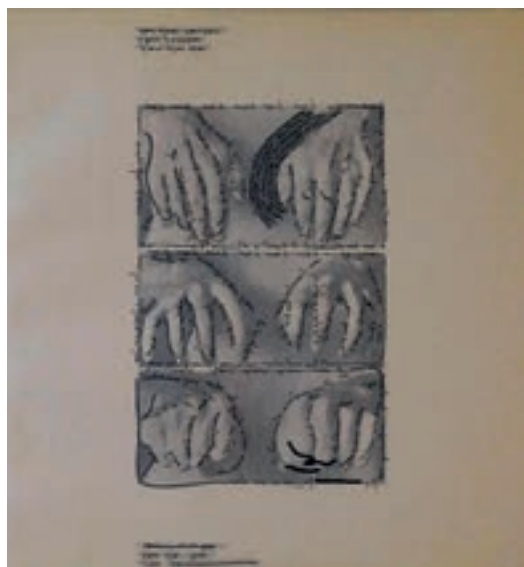
1. Sergey Kishchenko, *Urtica dioica*. *Formaggio di verdure stufate*, dalla serie "Ricettario", 2017, foto, stampa e pigmenti, 60 x 40 cm, p. 428



1. *Cahier de l'Herne* n. 45: *Martin Heidegger*, 1983. Cover



2. Elizaveta Mnatsakanova, *U smerti v gostiakh / Beim Tode zu Gast*, Wien, Selbstverlag, 1986



3. Florian Kogler, *Das Buch Sabeth*. Documentary film, Austria, 2018. Video stills

4. Ketty La Rocca, *In principio erat*, Dortmund, Museum am Ostwald, 1975

5. Ketty La Rocca, *Craniologia (n. 12)*, 1973, X-ray on plexiglass, ink, Archivio Ketty La Rocca

1. Хрупкость плывущего мира, ГТГ 2024

2. Тенгай. Судзу, Япония 2024

3. Понолет, Музей Москвы 2023