

## Highland Institute for Contemporary Art

### Grow Together: Concrete Poetry in Brazil and Scotland

3 July – 7 August 2011

Opening at the Highland Institute for Contemporary Art on 3rd July, this exhibition includes works by some of the foremost concrete poets: The Noigandres Poets; Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos and Décio Pignatari from Brazil; Edwin Morgan and Ian Hamilton Finlay from Scotland.

Concrete poetry developed through the 1950s and '60s. In these works conventional poetic structures are discarded in favour of exploring the graphic properties of words and their arrangement; the poems 'yield initiative to the words'. Setting aside literal meanings, concrete poetry finds common-ground between all languages. In this, it is inherently international in outlook.

As well as presenting individually important poems, such pivotal works as Augusto de Campos' *Tensão*, the exhibition, with adjacent works in English and Portuguese, examines this correspondence between languages as well as between language and equivalents in sound and music. It specifically reflects on the communication between poets of different nationalities and, in this context, on the effects of location on meaning. Consistent with this the location of HICA, as rural gallery and research project, enables an active presentation where elements such as Morgan's *Chaffinch Map of Scotland* or Pignatari's *Terra*, painted directly onto the gallery walls, make immediate connection to the context of the space and exhibition, and determine a current meaning.

Background to the concrete poetry movement, especially in Brazil, will be presented through related materials, including interviews with Augusto de Campos and a film by Michel Fawre on the concrete artist Geraldo de Barros.

The exhibition's title, *Grow Together*, is from the Latin root of the word 'concrete'. Here, this etymology is particularly suggestive, of dialogue between geographically distant centres (Brazil and Scotland), or perhaps more pertinently, of the process of development of artworks and poems themselves: the process through which meaning finds form, exemplified in the exhibition by Haroldo de Campos' *Cristal Forma*.

In 1952, Augusto de Campos, with his brother Haroldo and Decio Pignatari, launched the literary magazine *Noigandres*, which initiated the Noigandres Group and the international movement of concrete poetry. The three also participated in, and helped create and organize, the First National Exhibition of Concrete Art in the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo, 1956. Their works have since been included in many international exhibitions and anthologies, and they are individually recognised for their output in poetry, the very wide range of their translations and their numerous writings, as well as their own further artistic and poetic projects.

The late Edwin Morgan was one of the most important Scottish poets of the 20th century. In 2004, he was named as the first Scots Makar or Scottish national poet.

As well as being an artist of international importance Ian Hamilton Finlay was considered Britain's foremost concrete poet. Little Sparta, the garden he made at his home in the Pentlands, is internationally renowned.

Geraldo de Barros is one of the most notable artists of the Brazilian concrete movement. He made pioneering work in photography, as well as working in painting, print, graphics and industrial design. He was a founder and member of various artistic groups and associations, including the Ruptura Group, Gallery Rex, the cooperative furniture producers Unilabor and the furniture industry *Hobjeto*.

*Grow Together: Concrete Poetry in Brazil and Scotland* has been supported by the Henry Moore Foundation. It runs from 3 July – 7 August, and is open on Sundays 2 - 5pm, or by appointment.

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