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Introduction

Susana González Aktories

Beyond Notation

There is no such thing as a unique understanding of notation. This is partly due to the fact that the concept has changed throughout time, molding and adapting to many different uses and expectations. Even when commonly linked to the realm of music, notation has been understood far beyond musical notes, which date back to the use of neumes, a form of punctuation whose origin was attributed to an Arameic writing system, which consisted of marks located above the words to indicate prosodic-melodic gestures and modulations. In the Middle Ages, this type of notation represented tone heights that served certain types of oral and chanting practices. A horizontal line throughout the text was sometimes added in order to serve as a clearer reference for the height-marks. The system gradually became more complex, introducing other temporal marks and further complementary lines. In the eleventh century, Guido d'Arezzo made valuable contributions to the standardization of a musical pattern, which by the fifteenth century had spread from Italy to the rest of Europe, and by the seventeenth century – configured in a pentagram or five-line staff – this type of notation became the key reference for Western musical scripture, as we still know it today. The tonal, temporal and articulatory paradigms which became stabilized, persisted for more than three centuries, a period of great cultural exchange between Europe and the Americas, including that of other possible representations of sound, for instance in Prehispanic codexes.

As a signifying system, Western notation would have particularly been questioned since the beginning of the twentieth century, mostly by musicians who found them too limited and insufficient in grasping other non-conventional but equally important expressive features that are part of the world of sound and music. Therefore, the previously established codes of notation, its scripture, its means of instruction as well as its layout on the page became subject to deconstruction in a process that has led to rethink and reinvent new forms for its inscription, interpretation and communication.

Many of the essays contained in this volume take position with regard to these historical transformations of the concept of notation, showing that despite its radical transformations, it is still an important reference for artistic creation.

In music, for example, contemporary notation has experimented with new and bold codes of scripture, geometrical shapes – some of them inspired by sculpture or architecture –, techniques of montage, use of color and drawing, which became part of the musical language that in turn was consciously opening up to a broader spectrum of interpretations. In an equally radical gesture, the scripture became in some cases deliberately proposed for an exclusively silent interpretation, seeing the musical score as a means of inner contemplation, rather than as an indicator of actual sound. In the realm of musical composition, these proposals conditioned a change in perspective that in turn changed musical literacy, an aspect which will be addressed by some of the authors in this volume.

From being a determined and fixed instruction, notation became a sort of open scripture that strengthened the agency of the reader/interpreter, who became touched and even provoked by it in unexpected and unprecedented ways. These scriptures not only posed questions about how to interpret them, but also about the limits of the readable – even those that helped understand the readable in the non-readable, or the readable after and beyond the non-readable.

These reflections have applied to music as well as to forms of notation that appear in other artistic realms. But it is interesting to note that while musicians were seeking ways to liberate themselves from the staves by exploring new forms of writing that brought them closer i. a. to visual arts, performances or poetry, this very same pattern seemed to become attractive for innovative artists who integrated with different purposes both in the fine arts as well as in visual and experimental poetics. Starting with the European avant-garde movements (particularly but not exclusively those of Futurism and Dadaism). Other forms of musical and sound references and types of experimental writing and notation were developed in most of these movements, including the ones that flourished in Latin American avant-garde (such as certain types of experimental Modernism as the one practiced by Brazilians – M. de Andrade –, or according to other aesthetic and political proposals, as in Ultraism and Stridentism in Argentina, Chile or Mexico), and later, within other artistic realms as for instance Lettrism, art and language, or other international and transcontinental

networks greatly oriented by the intermedial turn, as happened with most Fluxus artists, but also with Brazilian Concretists or artists that developed different forms of Mail art, where printing, scripture and space experimentation became extremely important. It is therefore no coincidence that many authors in this volume, regardless of their disciplinary background, take these same expressions as precursors or reference when trying to define their own work or to analyse artistic proposals of the late twentieth century and until today. Most of these works imply semiotic as well as cognitive challenges that invite us to continue reflecting on notation in the arts: either by recognizing similarities or differences in their use, or by noticing their forms of collaboration and interaction. Scripture as understood in literature might help understanding the ways it is used in other arts and vice versa, and its decodifying processes might in each case raise questions about its legibility, materiality and signification. All this from a contemporary view that has made us conscious of several crises such as discursivity, linearity, temporality, showing us how one and the same work of art can unfold and communicate simultaneously through such different languages and in so many dimensions.

Notation is thus situated in a liminal space where several media, intentions and perceptive modes may converge. And it is probably thanks to this flexibility that we may compare but also blend visions and expressions that at first sight might not have anything in common. As such, it integrates and sets the dialogue with different artistic traditions and languages, questioning in a provocative way the very idea of the notated, either as a trace of a previous action, or as a projection, for example in the form of a set of instructions for a realization to come. Notation is therefore also liminal in terms of its idea/concept and its concretizations.

This compendium includes texts that approach notations mostly in experimental art forms, where the boundaries between disciplines are relative, locating them in a common ground, making them share similar quests with regard to media, formats, actors, dynamics and conditions of artistic representation. This is what marks the crossroads in this volume on many levels. This is also what makes the cross-disciplinary dialogue between researchers, theorists and artists the main contribution to this volume.

These pages offer an open arena for academic and artistic reflection, which continues the paths opened up by the numerous proposals made on

this topic in the past decades.¹ But the particular aim here is to concentrate on the comparative and intermedial dimension of notation which brings to center stage the artistic potential inherent in each one of the works addressed in these texts, regardless of its disciplinary categorization or of its geographic and cultural provenance.

Notation is thus a virtuous and interdisciplinary node by which all articles seem to relate in natural, but also in surprising and enriching ways. We do not seek here to plow past lines on the topic that might appear redundant, but to unveil and fine-tune our current coordinates. The gathered articles make not a sum, but rather a potency of voices and perspectives which, through juxtaposition, allow us to see more of each text.

As suggested before, these voices and contributions come from very different academic and artistic contexts, both the Americas and Europe. The present volume is therefore conceived as an attempt to make these inter-American and transatlantic connections more visible and to reveal the many and strong connections through which they may be related in the field of the arts. This shows how ideas, concepts, and poetics of notation circulate with great ease in the international and transcultural space of the arts, yet it sometimes is worth to make a pause in order to reflect and update the discussions according to the new movements and proposals these transcultural as well as transatlantic dialogues have taken. This volume therefore tries to reflect on these dynamic developments and inscribes these reflections in a broader transcultural history of the arts in North and South.

Open Scriptures Within the Organization of This Volume

As mentioned before, this volume presents a broad spectrum of voices, both of scholars and artists, presented in a counterpoint that might raise more questions than give concluding answers to what notation really is. It is then an open body of texts that considers notation in an equally broad way, as “open scriptures.”

1 Cf. for example the exhibition catalogue *Notation. Form und Kalkül in den Künsten*, presented by H. von Amelnunx et al. at Akademie der Künste (Berlin, 2009); the compilation by T. Sauer, *Notations 21* (New York, 2009); the volume *Notationen und choreographisches Denken*, edited by G. Brandstetter, F. Hofmann and K. Maar (Freiburg i.Br., 2010); L. Kotz' study *Words to be Looked at. Language in 1960s Art* (Cambridge/London, 2010); or more recently, the exhibition catalogue *El giro notacional*, presented by J. Iges and M. Olvera at the MUSAC (Murcia, 2019).

Configuring the structure of the volume also met a real notation exercise in itself: among the many combinations to set the texts in dialogue, we had to finally select a form to put them together. The diverse possibilities demanded an actual mapping that would suggest the many assembling variables, according to common grounds that were either geographic, disciplinary or thematic.

We very quickly discarded organising the contributions chronologically or according to cultural geographies. Nor did we want to fall into a structure driven by an eventually natural and conventional disciplinary background: grouping literature on one side, music and sound art on the other, fine arts in yet another. We even discarded the categorisation according to the type of tone and approach suggested in each text: academic vs. artistic; objective vs. subjective; analytic, historiographic, biographic, etc. These alternatives lacked the original purpose of a true dialogue pursued in this third phase of our exchange. We deliberately took the risk of deconstructing these categories that seemed more foreseeable and therefore less surprising. By juxtaposing chronologies, geographies and disciplines, we could highlight in possibly unexpected ways coincidental inquiries and concerns of the authors as well as of the works cited. But the articles presented in this volume are so varied in their approach that the reader might at times get the impression of witnessing deaf dialogue. However, even if at first glance it might not be evident what they have in common, these texts communicate in many more levels, constellating around other types of themes and frames, some of which will be mentioned further on. Let us first succinctly present the contributions within the selected structure.

The twenty-one texts gathered here were grouped into five chapters or coordinates that share similar neighborhoods: Notation as Inscription-Layout; Materialities of the Notated; Performativity and Notation; Voice and Notation; Reading Notations. Still, the division impels us to recognize not only the common features, but also the contrasts, divergencies in interest, focus or outcomes even within a series of apparently similar discourses.

In an attempt to enter the topic gradually, “Notation as Inscription-Layout,” the first chapter, starts with an analytical perspective that presents a historical view of notation with regard to the development of punctuation. Here Elizabeth Bonapfel inaugurates the reader to “What’s the Point? The Development of Punctuation from Late Antiquity to Humanism,” explaining the emergence and development in the use of punc-

tuation marks, these discrete but fundamental elements that are rarely questioned in writing. She exemplifies this evolution by tracing the use of the semi-colon, the parenthesis and the exclamation mark, which have become part of a graphic, notational marking system, together with other practices that consider page layout, format, font, and spacing between words, all of which contributed to the readers' production of meaning and oral delivery. Bonapfel begins with abundant references to works by scholars such as M. B. Parkes, John Lennard, and De Hamel, revealing how punctuation served as a cognitive function of organizing verbal and non-verbal information.

Leaping in time and geography, we find a different quest with reference to inscription and layout, posed in Susanne Klengel's article "The Eye Also Reads. Notes on the Visual 'Keys' Present in Bolaño's Novels *Los detectives salvajes* and *2666*." It deals with a case study that addresses the narrative work of Chilean Roberto Bolaño from an aesthetic-semantic perspective, considering the integration of doodles. Klengel shows how these elements, beyond being mere complements to the text, are valuable items that enable the author to create crossroads between different stories and perspectives within the same plot. These graphic features, embedded in the text, have a strategic signification in Bolaño's work, and demand spatial deciphering.

In a similar line, but making another spatiotemporal jump, Ana Elena González presents another case study in "A Pause on the Landing: Contemporary Perpetuations of *Tristram Shandy*," where she analyses Jonathan Sterne's preference for the use of diverse graphic functions in the novel. González Treviño explains how these apparently disruptive elements in the narrative were precursory in many ways, encouraging further experimentation with visual elements. Presented from a personal perspective, the argument eloquently conduces the reader to contemporary revisitations, transpositions and perpetuations of Shandy's novel by diverse contemporary artists, which reinforces how his legacy continues until today and proves how his intermedial strategies have been further explored.

Having become more familiar with the potential and diversity of how notation and layout matter in literature, the chapter takes a turn in its second half by considering a musical perspective. Roberto Kolb's article, "Silvestre Revueltas' Visual Music: The Notation of Agency, Time, and Space in Post-Revolutionary Mexico as Inspired by the European and Mexican Avant-Gardes," keeps a musicological viewpoint, while suggesting other

forms of artistic representation and inscription: namely painting, photography and literature. Based on these relations, Kolb presents an original and at the same time systematic musical analysis revealing interesting similarities between the imagery and strategies used by other artists and the ones that can be traced in Revueltas' compositions.

The chapter closes with “Discerning Music, or About Being All Ears,” an article where Catalan composer Llorenç Barber shares, in a rather autobiographical, self-reflexive tone, his relation with musical scores and what they have represented throughout his creation. In addition to sharing his links to avant-garde arts as well as influences of artistic movements such as Fluxus, Barber also places his intermedial work within the experimental art of his time in Spain, revealing anecdotes that explain his personal choices and poetics, and particularly his ways of exploring what he calls “visual musics,” a form of *mise en page* that has become an important part of his creative repertoire. What at times might seem self-praising also gets playfully spiced up with a refreshing yet reflexive tone, highly dynamic, as well as profuse in descriptions. As a composer, Barber addresses the need for creative compositional expanded techniques that are evident in his notational processes, and that demand synaesthetic experiences of the reader.

The second chapter, “Materialities of the Notated,” is inaugurated by Irene Artigas' article “The Catalogue as Notation: Museums and Maps of Museums,” in which she explores the relation between an exhibition catalogue and other notions and figurations such as the inventory, the list or the atlas. By commenting on her personal experience with specific exhibitions, she points out the material differences between a physical tour of an actual exhibition in a museum space and its printed or digital catalogues. In these contexts, Artigas offers an understanding of notation, not only in terms of selection and curatorship, but also as instructions and signalizations of routes for the visitor-reader to follow in these material presentations, which at times seem to differ greatly from each another.

Complementary to the reflections of Artigas, in terms of thinking museography as a form of notation, Carsten Seiffarth, shows in “Some Notes on Notation in Sound Art” how this relatively established art form that borders visual art, electronic music and performance – what Bernhard Leitner has described as “sound-space-art” –, presents interesting challenges for artists and curators who have to materialize their sound installations according to concrete site-specific characteristics. By means of three specific examples (of Leitner, Alvin Lucier, and Stephan Roigk),

Seiffarth shows how these notes, drafts, photos and projections, as apparently circumstantial and accessory documents, bare in themselves forms of artistic notation. As mediating or even accessory elements, they reveal interesting aspects of the work, including inventories, lists of requirements, instructions for technical assembly, and conceptual strategies that result in a perceptual outcome for the visitor experience.

Seiffarth's pragmatic approach contrasts with the biographical and historiographical view offered by Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda and Adriana Santos in "Carmen Barrada's *Plástica Musical: Crossovers Between Notation and Painting*," which presents the collaborations between this Uruguayan avant-garde composer and her brother, the vibrationist painter Rafael Barradas, resulting in her experimentations with graphic notation. As in Kolb's article on Revueltas, the authors also refer to networks of collaboration and exchange between Latin American and European artists of this time. With Barradas' *Plástica Musical* they exemplify a unique approach she had to graphic notation, by incorporating some of her brother's graphic abstract forms. Barradas' notation also deals with the spatial elements of sound, the interest for adding an element of chance and improvisation to her works, and the manipulation of the piano with extended instrumental techniques.

The second chapter closes with the approach to another female artist who in the 1960s explored the communicative potential of notations in artist's books. "Warja Lavater's 'Sing-Song-Signs' and 'Folded Stories'" is the title of the text where Carol Jana Ribí profusely analyses these two pieces questioning how visually-conceived images by this Swiss artist can also be 'read'. They both present symbols of notational practice, as well as a narrative, becoming a hybrid form between picture and writing within the materiality of these particular forms of book object.

The third chapter, "Performativity and Notation," starts with a text that in itself is clearly performative: "Disrupting the Dominant Song" by Salomé Voegelin. This bold contribution is meant as a performative essay, in which the author assembles different types of works, textual forms and instructions in order to trigger a conscious and at the same time creative reading experience. In form of a 'scored' performance, which practices instructions "to survey the scope and limits of what a score authorizes and what its authority is," Voegelin engages this device to disrupt, resist and rethink its own representation.

From a different conceptual perspective, Belén Gache, in “Scripts and Scores in Contemporary Literature: Time, Constraints and Algorithms” offers a descriptive but concise survey of certain performative elements which, seen in retrospect, have marked her own creative path. Many of these references to practices coming from different artistic traditions that activated distinct performances may also be found – as she suggests – in some of her work. As a writer and electronic literature artist, she has found interest in concepts that are derived from the very notion of notation. Among these, we find a chain that leads from instruction, to prescription, to robotization, or on a different level the notions of algorithm and time. She finds that these are means for ironising and reverting the overall tendency of language determination, in search for new ways of offering creative discourses in e-literature as well as in analogic literature.

Mónica Benítez Dávila in “Writing and Language Through Movement and Noise in the Machinic Work of Artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer” takes a more academic approach to the work of Mexican contemporary artist Lozano-Hemmer and his dynamic kinetic machines. With machines, the author refers not only to the concrete and technical constructs of his installations, nor exclusively to their operatory language system that implies mathematical operations, but also to their performativity. Installations such as the “Caguamas Sinápticas” offer a synesthetic experience of object, movement and sound, which, according to Benítez, “de-writes” and reverts linear behavior by rules similar to Xenakis musical stochastics.

The chapter closes with a personal reflection by Aaron Finbloom on his own work, “Performative Conversational Notations: Critical Choreographies & Dialogical Games.” Here he explains his idea behind one of his pieces, describing its particular instructions, its language use and the roles of the different participants involved, contrasting its realization in different contexts. Notation, as he presents it, lies not only in the prescription, but also in the divergent performative conditions, as well as in their documentation.

Continuing in the spirit of Finbloom’s oral performances, the fourth chapter, “Voice and Notation,” presents three articles. The first one, “Time, Performance and Notation: Llorenç Barber and Felipe Ehrenberg Reading Out Loud,” by Susana González Aktories, analyses two ways of understanding the act of reading out loud and how temporality as well as spatiality and movement condition its reception. The piece by Barber, conceived as a written essay on time that is presented as an oral paper, calls into crisis

the aspect of velocity, either by accelerating the articulation or by slowing it down, in both cases to the point where the sense of the text is barely understood. In Ehrenbergs' sound poem, the act of reading aloud derives from a visual perception of advertisements and urban scenes randomly chosen during a car drive. By contrasting both pieces, the author shows how vocal effects and enactments are also compromised in both examples, but with different intentions and outcomes.

Montserrat Palacios, in "The Freedom of Vocal Expansion and Transferred Notation," shares her view of voice development and techniques by discussing diverse expressions of expanded voice, as they have been developed by different singers, performers, sound poets and other types of experimental artists throughout the past century. Being a singer and performer herself, Palacios focuses on the technical and conceptual contributions that link notation to a sounding materiality and a bodily experience, with a particular interest in female voices.

The chapter on voice closes with Mariana Masera's article "Orality in Popular Printings: A Voice Palimpsest," addressing vocal practices as they were induced in past centuries through a traditional form of songbook circulation in the format of "hojas volantes," that is, as printed texts with verses that evoked musical forms, becoming powerful artifacts which conveyed valuable information on sound. Masera explains with clear examples taken from the Mexican collection of Vanegas Arroyo how performance of these written prints was linked to certain knowledge and conventions that were derived either from social practices, circulation of these materials, or by inferring sounding instructions almost 'between the lines', for their oral expression. The author shows how these prints should be read as inter-medial devices, where voice, text, image, gesture and auralty converge as a whole discourse.

The final chapter picks up where the latter ended, namely, by offering a variety of approaches: "Reading Notation." It starts with Chiara Caradonna's "Reading Manuscripts as Notation. An Experiment into the Possibilities of Interpretation," which approaches the materiality of reproduced manuscripts and autogrammes, either in critical editions or more recently through access to digitalized manuscripts online as a valuable source for literary as well as musical analysis. The article explores the value of these manuscripts in terms of notation as a hermeneutical category, which allows for a creative and at the same time rigorous approach to the work of authors of the past. Caradonna refers for example to Kleist and Hölderlin

– particularly to his unfinished hymns – in order to illustrate the potentially sounding reality that is implied in their manuscripts, and to the significant interpretations that can be derived from a handwritten page, with its blanks, corrections and other marks that relate to its haptic perception. She thereby suggests that literary criticism can be stimulated in this case by approaches to manuscripts that may be conceptually related to musical scores.

Esteban King Álvarez presents a modality of reading and even of writing in “The Visuality of Writing. Technologies, Reading and Materialities.” By revising some of the work by Mexican artists Magali Lara, Ricardo Cuevas and Sebastián Romo, he illustrates different forms of writing and notating that can be found in their pieces, from sewed textures to sculptural letters or visual-tactile writings, offering interesting insights to the resource of alphabetical writing and notation in these contemporary artworks.

Leonie Achtnich, in “Memory and Music in Madeleine Thien’s *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*,” alludes to forms of reading that integrate musical, numerical or ideogramatical scriptures in narratives. These elements work similarly to the ones found in Klengel’s and González Treviño’s articles, proving that they are not simple illustrations but rather gestures, forms of punctuations which demand a flexible form of reading, and through which Thien places the reader in a temporal perspective between the present action and the memory these actions trigger in the characters, almost as instantaneous flashbacks. Achtnich proves further that these drafts become powerful discourses that confront Western vs. Eastern traditions, a matter which is clearly present in this Canadian author of Chinese origin.

Patricio Calatayud’s “Dynamic Music Notation” presents an elaborate yet simple argument by which he takes the reader on a journey from reading scores on a page to the challenge of creating legible scores in a digital era. In his article, Calatayud proposes the design of a reading model based on geometry to measure the spatial and topological location of notational symbols, a reflection which confronts us with the legible within the illegible and the illegible within the legible.

With Georg Witte’s “Along the Margins. Notations that Kill the Notated,” we reach the final article, and at the same time the end of this volume. Witte demonstrates how Russian conceptual performance art as practiced since the 1970s helped establish a specific annotation practice. By offering diverse examples of how certain artists have explored the re-

source of instruction in their work, he distinguishes between the anticipating annotation, by which actions of the participants are foreseen, and the post-factual, documented annotation, materialized in photographs, videos, reports, geographical diagrams, written texts commenting the action, etc., by which the performances may be read from a different perspective. The author implies that these annotations evolve along the margins of actions and performances without actually becoming mere paratexts or “texts beside texts,” but texts “on occasion of” actions, movements, situations, where the actual performances disappear behind their elaborate framing of what he calls “contra-evidential” annotation, which according to him is closely related to an aesthetic of void and invisibility that shaped Russian conceptual art.

As illustrated by the variety of proposals, the authors revisit the concept of notation from different yet complementary angles. These are by no means the only possibilities to approach notation, nor does the volume aim to exhaust the field. Instead, by putting these texts together, confronted and/or combined, we believe to have offered stimulating if not provoking constellations by which the texts illuminate each other and contrast perspectives. The volume offers a dynamic arena for dialogue and exchange between traditions and cultural views as they are experienced and approached in Europe and the Americas today, inviting the reader to question, reflect and continue researching.

Together, these articles present a mosaic of diverse cultural and historical references, as well as a broad pallet of artistic languages and expressions, leading the reader to an overall impression of the evolution of notation that can be reassembled into different combinations.

For example, regarding the tone, some of these texts offer a more rigorously academic perspective (Bonapfel, Caradonna), as opposed to others that imply a more personal point of view, either as readers and analysts/researchers (Artigas, González Treviño), or as artists, who look back on the *œuvres* that influenced their creative processes (Barber, Gache) during certain stages of interpretative development (Palacios), or even reflecting on the conception, process and outcome of a specific piece (Finbloom).

There are approaches that have literary focuses, with special interests in intermedial strategies used in concrete works or authors from different cultural backgrounds (Klengel when analyzing the Chilean author Roberto Bolaño; Achtnich when approaching Chinese-Canadian author Made-

leine Thien – both contemporary authors – ; González Treviño when offering an interpretation of the creative legacy of Irish author Laurence Sterne; Caradonna when revising the work of Kleist and Hölderlin in the German tradition). Some of these articles share an interest in graphic materiality regardless of their discipline: Klengel, Achtnich and González Treviño with regard to specific literary texts; in a similar line, Bonapfel with her theorization on the history of punctuation, or Masera when discussing the prints of songbooks. Closer to music, we find Barber's reflections on his "visual musics"; Aceve's and Santos' findings on Barradas' musical-graphics; Calatayud's interest in the visual side of dynamic scores; or even Kolb's interest in Revueltas' musical images. And in the fine arts we would have Ribí's approach to object books; or King's incursion into verbal scriptures. According to a disciplinary constellation one could also group the articles, for example by their propositions regarding fine art, either by analysing the work of a certain artist (Benítez, Aceves), a group of artists (King mainly regarding visual artists, Seiffarth with interest on sound installations) or even when thinking of an art exhibition in its multiple re-presentations: within the exhibiting space itself, as a digital platform or as a book-catalogue (Artigas). Other articles share the fact that they comment on the relation between mathematical procedures and notation (Gache by discussing the notion of algorithm in art as well as in analogic and e-literature; Benítez and Calatayud by reflecting on dynamic digital scores, Witte by approaching actions in Russian conceptual art).

Regarding its mediation, we can find common values given to manuscripts and to the cyphered character of handwriting (Bonapfel, Caradonna), as we can trace from there certain oral practices when approaching the printed text, or regarding sound that leaves other forms of "imprints" and traces, on the tape, on the scene, on other registration devices, and even on the body itself (Voegelin, Masera, González Aktories, Finbloom, Witte, Palacios).

Most of the texts also establish similar genealogies that look back to avant-garde artistic movements (Gache, Witte, Aceves, Ribí, Kolb) or more recent ones, such as Fluxus (Calatayud, Palacios, Barber).

Of all possibilities, why did we opt for the order presented in this volume? Because it also felt right to start with the history of scripture, moving from there to layout, and from there to other materialities and performances, which at a certain point unveiled the voice as a dynamic force related to the need of notation, and finally concluding with the pos-

sibilities of legibility of the notated. But as said before, there is no definite hierarchy nor chronology within this journey. This is why the reader may feel free to start wherever seems right, surely finding many more crossroads that can be established between these texts. For now, it might be worth pointing out that despite the evident heterogeneity and diversity of the articles, it is no coincidence that notation in its multiple forms and ways of understanding offers cohesive elements that allow a fruitful dialogue in this volume.

Notation is something that deserves to be continuously discussed in the face of technical, ideological, cultural and social transformations at every level and in all places. Notation suggests a rich set of creative alternatives and ways of interpretation: notation as an object, as a projection, be it in form of retrospect memory, as a future promise, or as a way of positioning ourselves in the present. Notation is an invitation to gain a better understanding of ourselves and our world. In a present so volatile, dynamic and full of uncertainties as we experience it today, addressing notation is not a solution, but surely a good alternative.