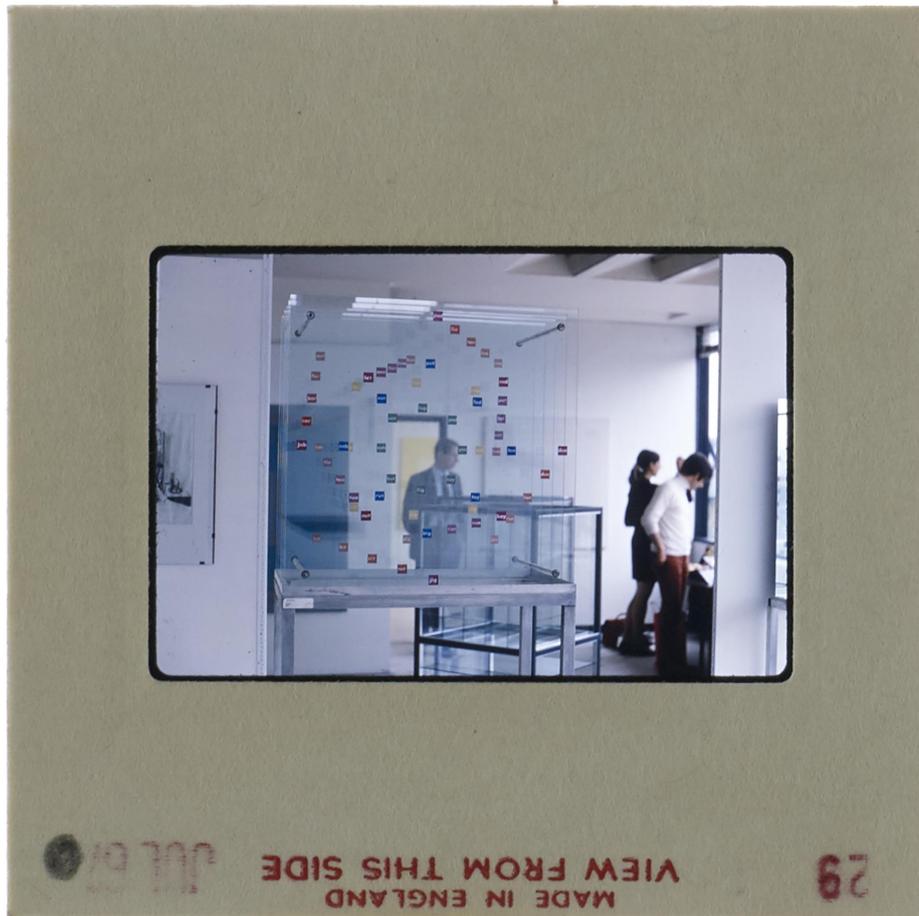


***Astro-poems and vertical group exercises: Concrete poetry at CSA***

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**Private view: Tuesday 12 June, 6-8.30pm**

**Exhibition continues: 13 June – 13 July 2018**



Installation view including Tom Edmonds work, Diploma show CSA 1967  
(Digitised slide, courtesy Chelsea College of Arts Library, University of the Arts London)

**Chelsea Space** is pleased to announce ***Astro-poems and vertical group exercises: Concrete poetry at CSA*** [Chelsea School of Art], curated by **Gustavo Grandal Montero**, librarian and researcher. The exhibition surveys the adoption of Concrete Poetry by British artists and designers, charting its evolution in the central years of the 1960s, displaying a range of experimental approaches on and off the page that explore the possibilities of language materialised into 3D objects, and the relationship between these constructions and their surrounding spaces. The exhibition presents key original artworks from this period by **Tom Edmonds** (1944-1971), student and later lecturer at CSA and influential designer, artist and educator **Edward Wright** (1912-1988), Head of Graphics at CSA, with collaborations from a range of other artists, such as Ian Hamilton Finlay and Dom Sylvester Houédard, and newly discovered archival documentation.

The years 1964 to 1967 saw a rapid expansion in the number of Concrete Poetry practitioners in the UK. The introduction of larger and more complex printed work, using colour, paper structures and offset printing, was quickly followed by the creation of 3D pieces, new materials and techniques, and later larger installations, some of them for public spaces: textile banners, wall-mounted pieces, and glass, plastic, metal, wood and concrete structures.

Art schools were essential in this development, by providing new technical infrastructure and expertise, as well as a space for experimentation and the dissemination of ideas and establishing connections between artists, graphic designers, geographical areas and groups. They were places where students and staff were experimenting, combining multiple influences, local and international, including that of Concrete Poetry, Constructivism, and later, conceptual art, minimalism and land art.

The exhibition takes its title from *astro-poems*: a series of glass boxes that create 3D typographical structures, produced by Tom Edmonds and an essay by Edward Wright entitled 'Vertical group exercises in graphic design', where he described his experimental approach to teaching and collaborative making at the time. In addition to Houédard and Finlay, other collaborators included are Openings Press, John Furnival, Stephen Bann and several of Wright's students. The contribution by Wright and other CSA staff and students to the important *Concrete Poetry Exhibition* at the inaugural Brighton Festival of 1967 is also highlighted in the exhibition. ***Astro-poems and vertical group exercises*** will contain typewriter compositions and "poem-paintings" by the almost forgotten Tom Edmonds, many displayed for the first time since the 1970s, in addition to newly found documentation from the mid and late 60s, including of his diploma show in 1967.

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## Public Programme

A re-enactment of the hanging of *Long Vowel Poem* banner by Edward Wright will take place at Chelsea College of Arts on Tuesday 5 June at 11am.

A panel discussion including Stephen Bann, Charles Verey and Chris Yetton will accompany the gallery programme on 27 June 2018 6-7.30pm, Lecture Theatre, Chelsea College of Arts.

A series of tours will take place on 4 July from 2pm, with a curator tour of the exhibition, a typography tour with Fraser Muggeridge and a performative tour of selected works with Nicola Simpson.

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## Notes:

Chelsea School of Art (CSA) is the former name for Chelsea College of Arts

Edward Wright, 'Vertical group exercises in graphic design', *Visible Language*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1967, pp. 387–408

## Ends

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**Publication:** Each exhibition at Chelsea Space is accompanied by a publication, published by Chelsea Space.

**Press Information:** For further information, images or to discuss interviews please contact:  
Karen Di Franco or Cherie Silver at Chelsea Space via email [info@chelseaspace.org](mailto:info@chelseaspace.org) or tel:020 7514 6983

## Notes to Editors

- **Note about 'CSA':** the current name for Chelsea School of Art is Chelsea College of Arts (since 2013). Between 1989-2013 it was Chelsea College of Art and Design.
- **Images and further information** are available upon request.
- **About: Chelsea Space** is a public exhibiting space, sited on the Millbank campus of Chelsea College of Arts, where invited art and design professionals are encouraged to work on experimental curatorial projects. See: [www.chelseaspace.org](http://www.chelseaspace.org)
- In copy please refer to **Chelsea Space** and not 'The Chelsea space.'
- **Gallery opening times:** Wed - Fri: 11:00 – 17:00 and by appointment.
- **Private view:** Tuesday 12 June 2018, 6-8:30pm

**PRESS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Chelsea Space

- **Admission Free**
- **Chelsea College of Arts** is one of the world's leading art and design institutions.
- Located at Millbank, next door to Tate Britain, Chelsea specialises in Fine Art, Graphic Design and Interior and Textiles Design. Since its origins in the 19th century, the College has produced many of the greatest names in the arts, including: Quentin Blake (illustrator and author) Ralph Fiennes (film and stage actor), Anish Kapoor (sculptor), Steve McQueen (artist), Chris Ofili (artist), Alan Rickman (film and stage actor), Alexei Sayle (comedian) and Gavin Turk (sculptor).

Operating at the heart of the world's creative capital, **University of the Arts London** is a vibrant international centre for innovative teaching and research in arts, design, fashion, communication and the performing arts. The University is made up of six Colleges: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, Chelsea College of Arts, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion and Wimbledon College of Art. Renowned names in the cultural and creative sectors produced by the University include 12 Turner prize winners and over half of all nominees, 10 out of 17 fashion designers named British Designer of the Year, more than half of the designers showcased in London Fashion Week and 12 out of 30 winners of the Jerwood Photography Award.