

KINGS

*Daniel John Pilkington,
Mark Gowing, Aaron Perkins,
Lani Knezevic*

ABECEDARIANS

JUNE

18.06.26–12.07.26

Artist Run

Established in 2003, KINGS Artist-Run provides a location for contemporary art practice, supporting distinctive experimental projects by artists at all stages of their careers.

Open 12 - 5pm, Thursday - Friday
12 - 4pm, Saturday - Sunday
69 Capel Street
West Melbourne VIC 3003

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Abecedarians

Alphabets are usually invented by graphic designers or typographers. Why would an artist want to create their own alphabet? Perhaps to write something that can only be written in this alphabet. Perhaps to give voice to something that wants to be written or said in its own script. Or perhaps to explore the materiality of writing itself.

In this exhibition, each artist has created their own alphabet and either used it to produce a singular act of writing or to present the alphabet itself as a work of art. The show suggests that new alphabets mean new ways of writing. Alphabets are reimagined as sites of invention, disruption, and possibility. Each artist asks: what does it mean to make a new alphabet, and what kinds of communication become possible through it?

Mark Gowing, founder and director of The Letters, a type company that develops expressive fonts, creates work that explores language as rhythm and frequency, plotting written phrases into abstract geometries that resist conscious composition. Aaron Perkins presents a deviant alphabet constructed from the letterforms of the standard 26-letter alphabet to explore the unwritten meanings that shadow, corrupt and colour every use of language. Lani Knezevic has created a hybrid alphabet that combines Latin and Cyrillic scripts, overlaying forms held in common and adjusting the differences. This project speaks to her cultural heritage and intention to reimagine letter design across writing systems. Daniel John Pilkington has developed an original three-dimensional alphabet in which each letter of the Latin script is transformed into a spear-like form. This alphabet is used to construct a series of sculpture-poems that explore language as an event, drawing on concrete poetry, apotropaic magic, self-reflexive palindromes, and the tension between readability and secrecy.

Together these works propose that alphabets can be thought of as an artistic medium in their own right. By reinventing the alphabet, the artists reinvent writing itself.

Daniel John Pilkington is a poet, artist, and researcher living in Naarm. His artistic practice is closely related to his writing practice and is largely concerned with philosophical questions surrounding the nature of language. Working across visual poetry, text-based art, sculpture, animation, and printmaking, his work explores the limits and materiality of language, linguistic coincidences and iconicity, as well as the gestural relationships that exist between handwriting and drawing. He is particularly interested in the point at which language becomes image, object, or event. He is the author of the poetry chapbook *X* (SOD Press 2026) and *Magic and the Occult in Contemporary Poetry* (Palgrave Macmillan 2026).

Aaron Perkins is a Naarm-based artist with a conceptual text-based visual arts practice that playfully explores the failures and limitations of language within everyday epistemologies. He has a keen interest in literature and holds a PhD for his research into the potential of fiction within painting. Perkins has shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Naarm, Meanjin and Tarantania; has been a finalist in the Girra, Omnia, Redland, Elaine Bermingham, Sunshine Coast, and Moreton Bay Region art prizes; and has contributed interviews and catalogue texts for various artist-run initiatives and other text-based artists.

Mark Gowing lives and works on Gadigal/Wangal Country. Through a practice spanning more than 35 years he has developed a personal inquiry into the poetry of form, grid and rhythm that he investigates using abstracted applications of text. Gowing's practice centres around the conceptual understanding of languages – graphic, written, oral or cultural. In order to question our innate understandings, Gowing's works often explore his written phrasing within a lyrical context, expressing visually discernable musical rhythms and frequencies. His work is held in numerous collections including the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York, USA.

Lani Knezevic is an Australian born, Croatian-raised artist, exploring new ways of communicating. Growing up bilingual, she developed an interest in writing systems, language “errors”, broken-English, cultural idioms and superstitions, and things lost in translation. Her visual language is precise and controlled, utilising simple patterns, phrases or singular letters that attempt, in combination, at cross-language understanding. Most recent shows include *U ARE HERE* (BLINDSIDE, 2025), *Irreverence* (Assembly Point, 2025), and *After Taste* (Green Floor Gallery, 2024). She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours (2024).

Artwork details (left to right):

Odradek, Aaron Perkins, 2026, Unique glyph components of Butler Stencil (Medium), reformed and excised from cardboard with acrylic and cement. Nine components, Dimensions variable

Language system of counter oblongs (I wish I had listened), Mark Gowing, 2025, Natural ochre, acrylic, graphite and book pages on aluminium, 73 x 56 cm

Language system of counter circles (This one is a song), Mark Gowing, 2025, Acrylic, graphite and book pages on aluminium, 73 x 56 cm

Kaladont! (Game over, I won), Lani Knezevic, 2026, Pen on paper on foam board, 30 x 39 cm

Novoslov Alphabet (in order of Gaj's Latin and Serbian Cyrillic), Lani Knezevic, 2026, Pen and pencil on paper on foam board, 30 x 39 cm

Novoslov cursive (words for practice), Lani Knezevic, 2026, Pen on paper on foam board, 30 x 39 cm

Language system of counter ellipses (e-bike in garden, e-bike in river), Mark Gowing, 2025, Enamel, acrylic, graphite and book pages on aluminium, 106 x 89 cm

Array, Daniel John Pilkington, 2026, Hydrostone, 70 x 70 cm