

## Language to Cover a Page: The Early Writings of Vito Acconci



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*(Lawrence Keeling)*

## LANGUAGE TO COVER A PAGE: THE EARLY WRITINGS OF VITO ACCONCI



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MIT Press Ltd. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Language to Cover a Page: The Early Writings of Vito Acconci, Vito Acconci, Craig Dworkin, Pioneering conceptual artist Vito Acconci began his career as a poet. In the 1960s, before beginning his work in performance and video art, Acconci studied at the Iowa Writers Workshop and published poems in journals and chapbooks. Almost all of this work remains unknown; much of it appeared in the self-produced magazines of the Lower East Side's mimeo revolution, and many other pieces were never published. Language to Cover a Page collects these writings for the first time and not only shows Acconci to be an important experimental writer of the period, but demonstrates the continuity of his early writing with his later work in film, video, and performance. Language to Cover a Page documents a key moment in the unprecedented intersection of artists and poets in the late 1960s--as seen in the Dwan Gallery's series of "Language" shows (1967-1970) and in Acconci's own journal 0 to 9. Indeed, as Acconci moved from the poetry scene to the art world, his poetry became increasingly performative while his artwork was often structured and motivated by linguistic play. Acconci's early writing recalls the work of Samuel Beckett, the deadpan voice of the nouveau roman, and the jump cuts and fraught permutations of the nouvelle vague. Poems in Language to Cover a Page explore the materiality of language ("language as matter and not ideas," as Robert Smithson put it), the physical space of the page, and the physicality of source texts (phonebooks, thesauruses, dictionaries). Other poems take the space of the page as an analogue to performance space or implicate the poem in a network of activity (as in his "Dial-a-Poem" pieces). Readers will find Acconci's inventive and accomplished poetry as...



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