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The Rhythm of the Cursive Line

Alice Mazzilli
Independent Artist-Researcher-Scribe, Europe
interowriting@gmail.com

Abstract
This paper reconsiders the terms *graffiti*, *tagging*, *writing*, *cursive*, and *calligraphy* as more than neutral descriptors, arguing that their meanings are historically contingent and politically charged. Modern graffiti, frequently labeled with the externally imposed "G-word," is better understood through the practitioners' own term, *stylewriting*, a tradition grounded in the letterform and the embodied act of writing. Drawing on PHASE 2's terminological interventions and Rammellzee's *Gothic Futurism*, the analysis positions stylewriting as a practice that redefines legibility, authorship, and spatial belonging. Comparative etymology further reveals how both *writing* and *graffiti* originate in the material act of scratching or incising, suggesting that their divergence in modern discourse obscures their shared lineage.
The paper then turns to cursive, traditionally defined as a flowing, rapid form of script. Rather than privileging its efficiency, cursive exemplifies writing as rhythm, gesture, and relational presence. Stylewriting, in its emphasis on flow, repetition, and deliberate illegibility, may be productively reframed as a form of cursive writing that enacts resistance through opacity. Illegibility, often dismissed as failure, is here reconsidered as a strategy of autonomy against institutional and algorithmic regimes of readability.
To advance this rethinking, I introduce Interowriting, my theoretical and artistic framework that conceives writing not as representation but as becoming. In dialogue with Deleuze's notion of the plane of immanence and contemporary accounts of interoception, Interowriting treats writing as an event of relation: a translation of bodily rhythms, affects, and intensities into marks that exceed the subject–object divide.

Keywords: Writing; Tagging; Stylewriting; Graffiti; Calligraphy; Cursive; Interowriting; Embodiment; Jamigraphy; Walking Wall.

WRITE.
Are we forgetting writing?
Maybe not everywhere or by everyone. But in the dominant cultural narratives of the Western Culture, where writing is being reduced to utility.
We're told to think of writing as information, as data processed by machines. As silent code that flows frictionless across screens—smooth, painless, and detached from the body that once carved it.
We have been trained to become efficient.
To optimise.
To disappear into systems that no longer ask for our presence, but only our input.
Writing, in its origin and in its essence, is the movement of a body under tension.
It carries the weight of breath, the tremor of intention, the resistance of matter.
Each mark is an act of labor, of presence, of struggle and care.
Graffiti remembers this.
Tagging remembers this.
They are not simply names scrawled on walls.
They are signatures of life in a world designed to erase us.

A tag is a claim—not of property, but of existence.
It is a line drawn against forgetting.
A shield held up to hold space in a landscape of disappearance.
This is my line.
This is my gesture.
I am here.

They are Disciplines.

They demand rigor and preparation, drill and repetition. The hand must be trained; the body must be ready. Each gesture is honed through countless acts of practice, a choreography of motion that binds breath, muscle, and mind.

They are Cursive.

Letters'
Rhythm
Play
What plays through letters is not meaning but Being— a rhythm before the word.
The surface listens.
The line defines.
Letters do not speak— they move. In every mark: a path, a pulse.
We do not speak. We move. We listen. We answer with rhythm.
Letters
Write
Rhythm
To write is to challenge the world as it is presented to us. To write is to open a space where we might meet the other—and ourselves— without guarantees, without protection.

This is Interowriting.

The line is a weapon, but not one of violence. It is a weapon of presence, a defence against erasure.
It does not harm; it holds.
It does not conquer; it protects what must not be lost:
Presence.
Transformation.
The truth of the body in motion.
Interowriting arises not from intention alone, but from the whole living system of the writer in relation to the world. It serves life itself.
Every mark you make is a stand.
Every action you train is a defence against disappearance.
Every line you trace is a door back to the world.

And the world needs our hand.

On the Fluidity of Meaning

When we speak of writing, graffiti, calligraphy, or cursive, we often assume these words refer to stable, clearly defined categories. Yet words, like the practices they describe, do not possess fixed essences. Their meanings emerge relationally, within a living network of distinctions, uses, and contexts. Structural linguistics has long shown that a word's meaning does not reside within the word itself but in its place within a system — its relation to what it is not, its constant renegotiation through use. Meaning, in this sense, is always in motion, never final. To speak of "graffiti" or "calligraphy" is thus to momentarily stabilize a field of relations that is in perpetual becoming. This perspective is crucial for reframing 'graffiti' as writing and for interrogating the Western construct of "beautiful writing" as separate from other forms of mark-making. If writing is understood not as a static code but as a rhythmic, material, and relational event, then graffiti, cursive, and calligraphy all appear as different modes of the same ongoing process: the impulse of *life* to manifest presence, to configure itself into systems, to participate in the unfolding of meaning, the impulse of *nothingness* to disclose itself, to differentiate into patterns, to open the event of meaning.

Reframing Graffiti, Writing, Calligraphy, and Cursive

This essay seeks to challenge and reframe the terminology that is often taken for granted when discussing *graffiti, tagging, writing, calligraphy, and cursive*. The word graffiti, as applied to modern urban writing, was not coined by the practitioners themselves but was imposed by media, police, and art institutions in the early 1970s. Its first

major appropriation into public discourse came with the *New York Times* article "'Taki 183' Spawns Pen Pals" (July 21, 1971) [1], which described "a Manhattan teenager who writes his name and his street number everywhere he goes," and noted that "he has spawned hundreds of imitators." What the *Times* was describing, however, was not what we now associate with graffiti — complex pieces — but the elemental act of tagging, the rapid and repeated inscription of a chosen name across the city. In other words, the label graffiti entered cultural vocabulary through the misidentification of tagging, the primordial gesture of name-making in motion. Writers themselves, by contrast, simply called it writing or getting up.

As the pioneering writer PHASE 2 famously argued, the so-called "G-word" carried derogatory, even racist connotations and did not belong to the vocabulary of the writers themselves [2]. PHASE 2 — widely credited with developing the bubble letter — consistently referred to his practice as writing or stylewriting, emphasizing its roots in the letterform and its direct relationship to the act of writing. This terminological insistence was not a minor point but a deliberate reclaiming of agency: by naming their work writing, practitioners asserted continuity with a living, evolving tradition of literacy and expression, rather than accepting the reductive label imposed from outside.

Over time, as tags were elaborated into throw-ups — quick, large-scale forms of writing that sit between a tag and a more elaborate piece — into full pieces (*masterpieces*), and eventually into wildstyle letterforms — highly complex interlocking scripts developed in mid-1970s New York — the media's term *graffiti* became retroactively attached to the entire culture. Today, in both public and art-historical language, graffiti is often equated with stylewriting: the evolved, highly stylized forms of writing that emerged from tagging. Yet it is crucial to remember that the name *graffiti* itself was imposed from the outside, and that its original referent was nothing more and nothing less than the tag: a name in motion, written at speed, staking presence in the urban landscape. For this reason, throughout the development of this article I will refer to what is commonly called "modern graffiti" as *stylewriting*, in recognition of the culture's original self-definition.

This reframing gains further weight when viewed through etymology. Although the history of writing systems is vast and heterogeneous, in several Indo-European languages the earliest words for writing convey a strikingly material and tactile sense.

The English verb *write* comes from Old English *wrītan*, which originally meant "to score, scratch, incise, or carve," specifically with the sense of scratching runes or marks into a surface.

The Proto-Germanic *writaną* means "to tear, scratch, outline." Writing, in its earliest sense, was not about abstract encoding but a physical, even violent action: to score or cut into something, closer to engraving than to painting.

The Italian *scrivere* comes from the Latin *scrībere* — "to incise, to draw, to write" — which ultimately derives from the Proto-Indo-European root *sker-* or *skribh-*, meaning "to cut, to carve, to scratch." The earliest sense of the word referred to the act of physically inscribing a surface, leaving a trace that literally bites into matter.

In Greek, *γράφειν* (*gráphein*) also means "to scratch, to inscribe," sharing the same physicality and giving rise to words like *graphê* (writing) and *graphos* (scribe). Here again, the emphasis is on the act of tracing lines rather than abstract encoding — writing as a material gesture.

In ancient Egyptian, the verb for "to write" is *sesh* (𓏛), and the noun for "writing/scribe" is *sesh* or *sesh-nesu* (royal scribe). The determinative for writing was a papyrus roll, reinforcing the act of writing as a concrete practice. The earliest divine figure associated with writing was the goddess Seshat, patroness of scribes, measurement, and record-keeping. Writing was not merely a record but a magical act that could invoke divine presence and ensure the maintenance of *maat* — cosmic order. Later, Thoth, god of wisdom, became widely venerated as a patron of writing and knowledge, often seen as Seshat's complement.

In Mesopotamia, writing's earliest function was administrative: clay tokens and bullae were used to count grain, livestock, and goods long before the first cuneiform signs. Over time, these marks evolved into a full writing system, and with this transformation came a shift in its cultural role. Nisaba, the Sumerian goddess of

grain, writing, and scribes, presided over this transition. She was said to have given writing to humanity, and scribes invoked her before beginning their work. Under her patronage, writing transcended accounting and became a vehicle for literature, hymnody, and prayer — from royal inscriptions to the earliest surviving poems, including those of Enheduanna, the high priestess of Ur and the first named author in history (Hallo and van Dijk 1968). This evolution reveals how writing moved from recording transactions to articulating memory, devotion, and identity.

Writing, in its etymological origin, is therefore an act of engraving the world, leaving a durable mark that fixes presence in time. Seen from this perspective, stylewriting is not a deviation from writing but a continuation of its earliest form. It reintroduces gesture, risk, and public space into the act of inscription, bringing writing closer to its original function as a performative and material act.

It is important to note that the notion of *calligraphy* as "beautiful writing" is itself a Western construct. The Greek *kalligraphía* literally means "beautiful writing," and historically this aesthetic valorization developed in European and Arabic traditions. In Western art theory, calligraphy is often divided from everyday writing, elevated into a decorative or expressive domain. Steven Connor, in his writing on surfaces and inscription, emphasizes how cultural regimes generate distinctions between "ordinary" and "elevated" marks — a process of aesthetic stratification applied unevenly across histories [3]. Meanwhile, James Elkins argues that all writing contains aesthetic character, claiming that even "plain" fonts have expressive shape and style [4] (Elkins 1999). From their perspectives, *calligraphy* as a separate "art" of writing is not a universal norm but a historically specific category. In many non-Western contexts, there is no strict separation between functional writing and aesthetic expression: writing is writing, whether sacred, poetic, bureaucratic, or ordinary. Recasting calligraphy as a culturally bounded concept allows us to see stylewriting not as a marginal "art form" but as part of a continuum of writing practices that always entwine utility, ritual, and aesthetic variation.

Graffiti and writing are often treated as distinct cultural phenomena — the former seen as transgressive and marginal, or just an art form, the latter as sanctioned and orderly — yet their etymological and historical roots reveal a shared origin. Stylewriting reactivates the tactile and spatial dimension of writing that modern print and digital technologies have largely abstracted away. In this sense, it restores writing to its origin as a performative act of presence, one that claims space and leaves a visible trace of the writer's body in time.

This emphasis on writing as movement and rhythm naturally leads to the notion of cursive, a term that foregrounds flow, speed, and continuity as intrinsic to the act of writing. The term *cursive* dates to the late eighteenth century, deriving from the medieval Latin *cursivus*, itself from the verb *currere*, "to run." Within the context of the Latin alphabet, cursive is typically defined as a style of penmanship in which characters are joined in a continuous, flowing manner, generally to facilitate greater speed of writing, in contrast to so-called block letters. Yet such definitions privilege the result of cursive over the act of writing itself. Cursive is not merely a technique for linking letters: the physical motion of the hand, wrist, and arm is as intrinsic to cursive as the marks that emerge on the page. The rhythm of writing, the shifting of pressure, the sweeping arcs and subtle hesitations — these kinetic dimensions are largely absent from conventional definitions. Writing in a flowing manner is not simply a matter of efficiency; it is a way of inhabiting movement.

As Tim Ingold argues, a line is not merely a static trace but "a trail along which life is lived" (Ingold 2007)[5]. Writing, in this sense, is less the production of fixed symbols and more the enactment of a trajectory — a continuous negotiation between the body, the surface, and the materiality of the tool. Cursive, viewed through this lens, becomes a choreography of attention: a correspondence between the movement of the writer and the unfolding of the line on the page. Ingold (2011)[6] suggests that such practices are not simply acts of representation but processes of becoming, in which the practitioner and the medium are mutually transformed. The gesture of cursive thus carries with it a temporal

depth — the momentum of the hand that preceded the line and the anticipation of the next movement to come. This view reframes cursive as an event rather than a form, foregrounding its phenomenological dimension.
Across cultures, cursive forms are characterized by a deliberate rhythm that signals mastery and control. In a society increasingly shaped by the acceleration of communication and production, cursive offers a counterpoint: a pedagogy of intentional movement. As emphasized in *The Art of Chinese Writing*, "The secret in cursive writing is controlling the rhythm with which one writes. […] Cursive writing is a difficult, involved genre. It requires not only unerring technique but also a thorough knowledge of the history of writing in general and the cursive script in particular" (Billetter 1990)[7].
From this perspective, cursive may be understood through the following interrelated principles:

Rhythm and Flow – the temporal quality of writing as movement.

Manual Gesture – the embodied act of writing performed by hand.

Ligature and Connectedness – the linking of forms into a continuum.

Freedom of Interpretation – the openness of cursive to variation and individual style.

Line as Mark and Trajectory – the dual role of the line as both graphic element and directional path of writing.

The emergence of any writing system begins with the formulation of a graphic principle: a fundamental idea that determines how language is to be visually encoded. Cursive writing significantly influenced the evolution of written symbols. As symbol systems became more established and widely recognized, writers were increasingly able to introduce variations. Signs took on greater diversity, developed more internal cohesion, and the written line emerged almost organically from the act of writing itself. This marks a profound shift: from writing as a series of discrete symbols to writing as a line — a rhythmic, continuous gesture. The cursive line thus represents not only a stylistic innovation but the product of a highly developed cultural process, where writing becomes an expression of rhythm, movement, and refinement.[8] In Islamic calligraphy, for instance, cursive forms are infused with spiritual significance, where the act of writing is seen as a devotional practice. In Chinese calligraphy, especially in its cursive variants, the expressive potential of the brushstroke is directly tied to the artist's *qi*, or life force, which animates the line beyond its semantic content.

Stylewriting aligns with these traditions in its embrace of the line as expressive force. Contemporary stylewriting offers a living laboratory in which the material, spatial, and social dimensions of writing are made explicit: letters become sites of experimentation, surfaces become contested spaces, and writing reasserts its status as a public, performative act. By situating stylewriting within a broader history of script innovation — from early urban inscriptions to typographic formalization — we can trace how writing continually renegotiates its visual form, its relation to space, and its role within cultural discourse.

Cursive Stylewriting
If writing is, as we have seen, not a fixed essence but a practice in perpetual becoming, then stylewriting can be read as one of its most vivid contemporary modalities. The act of tagging is not simply a mark on a surface but an event — performed in motion, often under conditions of urgency, risk, or transgression. In this sense, the tag is not just drawn; it is enacted. Its repetition across the urban fabric generates a rhythm that is as much about visibility and presence as it is about aesthetics.

Cursive writing across traditions shares this resistance to stasis. It thrives in the interval between control and flow, a space where gesture is both disciplined and free. Stylewriting can thus be understood as a form of cursive writing expanded into the city — letters stretched, bent, and transformed into vectors of energy. As Ella Chmielewska observes, graffiti "takes place" in a double sense: it occupies physical space, inscribing walls, doors, and trains, but it also stages a performance, a taking-place that is temporal, embodied, and relational [9].

Yet stylewriting does more than claim space — it **un-grounds** it. The hand does not merely write on space; it writes *through* space, opening it toward nothingness — not as negation, but as suspension. Writing becomes a clearing in which the ordinary stability of the built world falters and is reconfigured as a field of relations. This is a move away from thinking of writing as disclosing *being* and toward understanding it as disclosing **non-being**: a space where meaning, self, and city are no longer fixed but are continually remade. In this light, the tag is not simply saying "I am here" but rather "**here is made by this act**".

This shift also reframes the figure of the writer. The repeated name in a tag might seem like an assertion of ego, but anonymity and aliasing complicate this reading. Tags are rarely signed with the legal identity of their maker; they are pseudonyms, masks, alter-egos. The writer becomes both present and absent — present as gesture, absent as individual. In this sense, stylewriting enacts a kind of **self-emptying**: the self dissolves into repetition, into rhythm, into the collective flux of tags that cover the city.
This aligns with Derrida's notion of *différance*: meaning, like the self, is always deferred, never fully present, emerging only through its difference from and relation to other signs.[10] Closely tied to this is Derrida's concept of the **trace** — the idea that every sign bears within it the mark of what it is not, a residue of absence that makes presence possible. Stylewriting materializes this logic: its letters stretch, morph, and fracture, carrying traces of other forms and other writers, refusing a single stable identity and pointing always beyond themselves.

In dialogue with Derrida, Tim Ingold offers another perspective on the trace. In *Lines: A Brief History*, Ingold defines the trace not as a static mark but as "a line that has been lived," a path of movement left behind by the body in motion.[11] Whereas Derrida's trace highlights absence and deferral, Ingold's trace emphasizes process and presence-in-motion. Together, these views allow us to see stylewriting as both spectral and kinetic: each tag is simultaneously the residue of a vanished act and a continuation of the writer's trajectory. It is a lived line that records a passage, a gesture, an encounter — but one that never fully coincides with itself, always haunted by what it is not. In this sense, stylewriting stands in direct continuity with cursive writing: both are choreographies of the hand, inscriptions where rhythm and motion become inseparable from meaning itself.
Legibility becomes central in this play of presence and absence. Historically, cursive has always been caught between speed and clarity, praised for its expressiveness yet criticized for its difficulty. Stylewriting radicalizes this tension: its deliberate complication — even obstruction — of legibility becomes a form of resistance. Stylewriting's dense, armored forms withhold immediate comprehension, denying passive consumption and forcing the viewer to either learn the code or remain outside it. Illegibility thus becomes an ethical gesture, a way of resisting capture by systems of visibility and control.

While a full treatment of legibility's politics exceeds the scope of this text, it is crucial to register that the sacrifice of legibility is not a failure but a redefinition of what writing can do. Rather than optimizing for speed or communicative efficiency, stylewriting asserts writing as a site of struggle, a space where power, recognition, and belonging are negotiated through form.

Graffiti writers often embrace the label of *vandal* rather than that of *artist*. To be an "artist" risks incorporation into institutional frameworks that neutralize the disruptive force of writing; to be a "vandal" is to insist on rupture, to expose the fragility of social order, and to mark space against the grain of sanctioned visibility. This tension is not new. The use of writing outside official channels has historically operated as a destabilizing force: Dante's choice to write the *Divina Commedia* in the Tuscan vernacular rather than in Latin, or Luther's translation of the Bible into German, were both seen as vulgar, even profane gestures that threatened established authorities. In each case, the so-called "lower" or "illegitimate" form of writing became the very medium of cultural transformation. In this light, stylewriting's embrace of vandalism can be read as part of a longer history of writing practices that reconfigure power through their refusal to comply with dominant norms of language, legibility, and legitimacy.

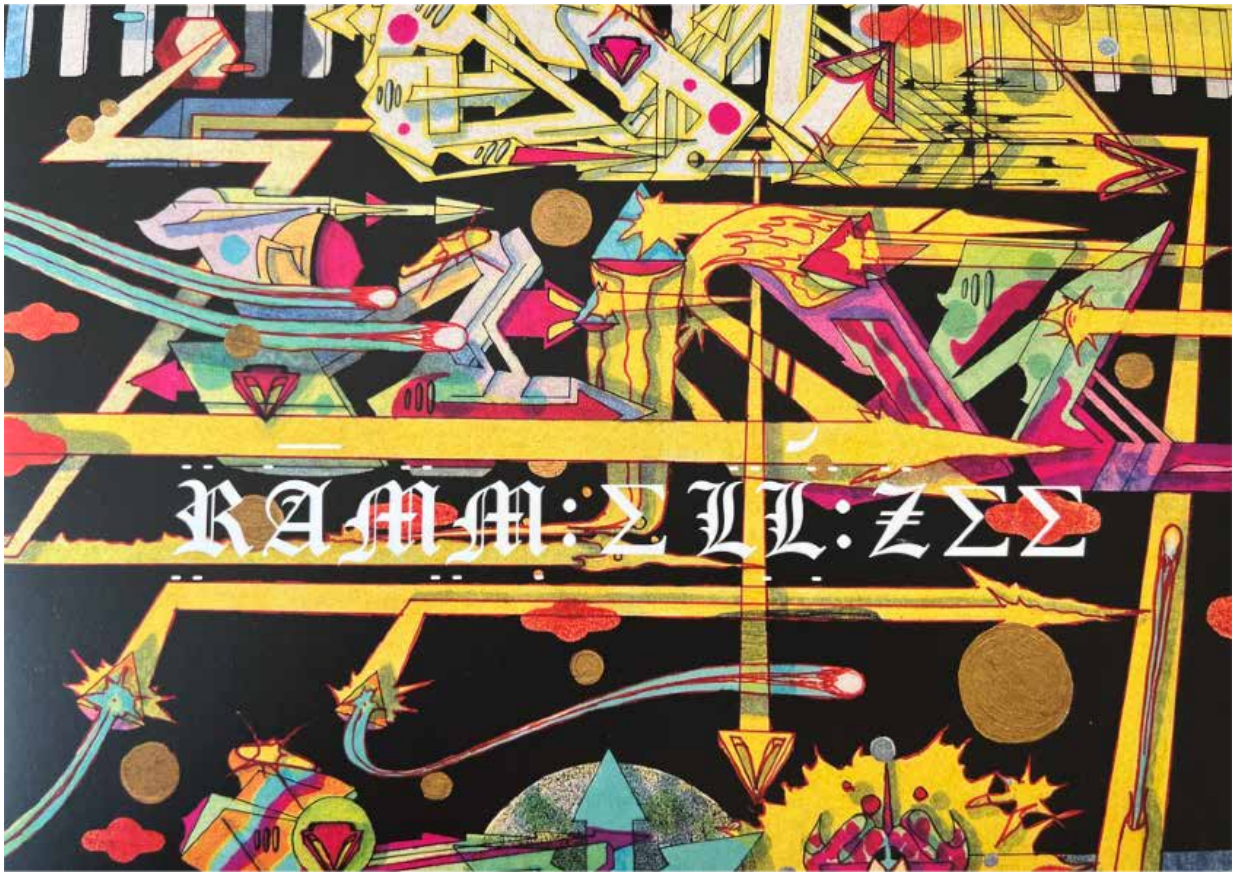

Figure 1. Rammellzee, album cover artwork, exemplifying Gothic Futurism and Ikonoklast Panzerism through weaponized letterforms and cosmic geometries.

Seen against the history of writing as an instrument of standardization and control — from the colonial imposition of Latin script to the valorization of Roman type — tagging and stylewriting emerges as a refusal. It challenges the assumption that writing must be uniform, transparent, or sanctioned. In this regard, Rammellzee's **Gothic Futurism** becomes crucial. In his 1983 manifesto *Gothic Futurism: Assassin Knowledges of the Remanifestation of Letter* [12], Rammellzee describes the alphabet as a system that has been "enslaved" by the state and by what he calls "iconoclast powers." His project was to liberate letters from this condition, turning them into "armored" entities capable of autonomous action. This vision is not merely metaphorical: Rammellzee created three-dimensional sculptural "Letter Racers," kinetic machines designed to propel each letter as if it were a weapon launched into battle.

Picture from rammealbum cover with For Rammellzee, *wildstyle writing* was a battleground where language could be decolonized — wrested away from state control, typographic standardization, and the rationalizing gaze. "Ikonoklast Panzerism," his term for this practice, reframes graffiti as more than an aesthetic rebellion: it is an insurgency at the level of the sign itself. Letters are reconfigured as tactical units, destabilizing the linear order of the alphabet and exploding into new configurations that resist capture by official language systems.

This radical repositioning of writing resonates with Interowriting's approach: both see writing not as neutral communication but as a force of transformation, capable of dissolving the authority of fixed meaning and opening new spaces of relation. In the framework of non-being, this liberation of letters is not just about reclaiming presence but about creating a space where language

itself is suspended, reconfigured, and set free to become something other.

Stylewriting, like cursive, reveals writing as movement, rhythm, and presence — but also as a gesture toward emptiness. It does not simply inscribe a stable world; it ungrounds it, allowing space, language, and self to be reimagined. Writing here becomes not the affirmation of what is, but the opening of what might yet come into being — or perhaps, into non-being.

Interowriting: Writing as Becoming

Interowriting is both my theoretical framework and artistic research method, developed to rethink writing as a living, relational process rather than a fixed system of representation. I used the word embodiment a few times and it's time to define my idea of what a body is. It approaches writing not as the projection of an interior subject onto an external surface but as the emergence of relations within what Gilles Deleuze calls the plane of immanence — a field where life, thought, and matter coexist without hierarchy or transcendence.[13]

For Deleuze, the body is not a closed container with an "inside" and "outside" but a composition of forces, affects, and capacities to affect and be affected.[14] A body is defined not by what it *is* but by what it *can do*: its speeds and slownesses, its resonances with other bodies, its capacity to enter into new assemblages. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call the *Body without Organs (BwO)* — not a literal body without anatomy, but a body freed from fixed organization, open to new arrangements of intensity and relation.[12]

Interowriting emerges from this Deleuzian understanding of the body. It treats writing not as the inscription of pre-formed meaning but as a process of **becoming-writing**: gestures, rhythms, and pressures that register the body's participation in a larger ecology of forces. The marks that result are not representations of a stable interiority but traces of a trajectory — partial, contingent, and open-ended.

A crucial conceptual foundation of Interowriting is **interoception**, the sensing and interpretation of the body's physiological and affective states — heartbeat, breath, visceral tension, temperature shifts, emotional tonality.[15] In cognitive science, interoception has been defined as the brain's capacity to map and predict signals from the internal milieu, enabling the regulation of homeostasis and the shaping of emotional experience. Research has demonstrated, for example, that individuals who are more accurate at perceiving their heartbeats also tend to have heightened emotional awareness and more effective emotion regulation.[16] Interoception has thus been strongly linked to the construction of selfhood and agency, understood as the capacity to integrate bodily feedback into coherent feelings and decisions.

Antonio Damasio's work provides a foundational model for this process. His *somatic marker hypothesis* suggests that bodily states act as "markers" that guide reasoning and decision-making: the body literally shapes thought. For Damasio, consciousness itself arises from the brain's continual mapping of the body's internal signals — what he calls the "proto-self."[17] This proto-self is not reflective or linguistic but a pre-reflective bodily register, continually updating and integrating visceral states with external stimuli. From this perspective, the sense of self is inseparable from interoceptive awareness, since it is through the registration of heartbeat, breath, and visceral tone that the organism comes to feel itself existing in the world.

Interowriting draws on these insights but reframes their implications. Rather than treating interoception as confirmation of a stable interior self, Interowriting regards it as a **field of relational attunement**. The very signals that neuroscience interprets as grounding selfhood are here understood as gradients, flows, and thresholds where the boundary between "inside" and "outside" is porous and shifting. Writing, in this sense, becomes a method of translating these subtle interoceptive rhythms into traces that others can encounter. The line, the mark, the gesture are not representations of a private interior but the externalization of a lived, pre-reflective becoming.

By placing interoception within the Deleuzian plane of immanence, Interowriting treats the body not as a bounded container but as a composition of forces and capacities. The hand that writes is not simply executing intention but is guided by pulse, breath, muscular micro-adjustments, and affective resonance. Each mark is

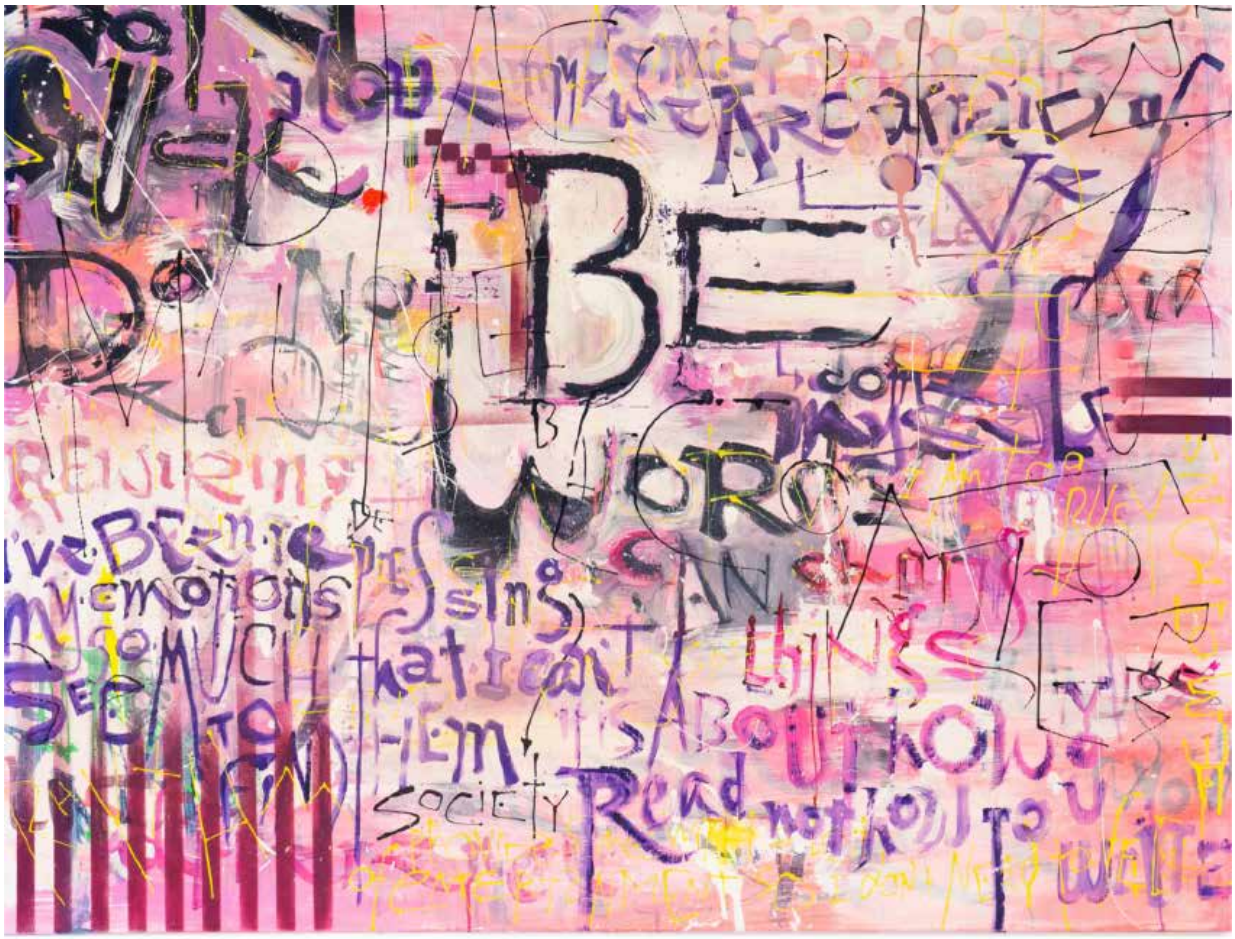

Figure 2. Alice Mazzilli, BE-COME (2024). Mixed media on canvas. The work exemplifies the principles of Interowriting, where writing emerges as relational gesture, rhythm, and temporal presence rather than fixed representation.

therefore a diagram of relation: between the body and the surface, the breath and the line, the self and others. In this way, Interowriting transforms interoception from a neurocognitive mechanism into an aesthetic and political practice — one that makes perceptible the thresholds where bodies meet and worlds are formed.

In practice, Interowriting is realized through participatory performances and workshops that stage writing as an **event** rather than a static product. Two of my key projects exemplify this approach:

Jamigraphy (a term I coined by combining *jamming* and *graphia*) is an improvisational practice that brings writing into direct dialogue with live music and movement. Participants are invited to respond to a soundscape — often created with musicians such as tabla players or DJs — by producing gestural marks. The aim is not semantic clarity but resonance: the marks become a record of breath, pulse, and movement, a visual rhythm in dialogue with sound.

The Walking Wall is a mobile, site-specific performance in which I wear a long white garment that functions as a writing surface and a moving "wall." Passersby are invited to contribute gestures directly onto the garment, layering their marks into a living palimpsest. This turns the body into a **membrane of relation**, a threshold where subject and object, artist and public meet and transform one another.

Figure 3. Alice Mazzilli aka Seshat, Jamigraphy Performance, Wasted Talent Festival, Rome (2024). Live participatory writing performance in collaboration with Viper Sound Rome, translating rhythm and sound into gestural marks within the framework of Interowriting.

Figure 4. Alice Mazzilli aka Seshat, Jamigraphy Workshop, Overline Jam, baronissi (2025). Live participatory writing performance in collaboration with SKILLS.

Figure 5. Alice Mazzilli aka Seshat, The Walking Wall, Wasted Talent Festival, Rome (2024). Participatory performance transforming the body into a mobile writing surface, inviting collective mark-making within the framework of Interowriting.

Both projects make writing a shared, rhythmic, and time-bound experience rather than a fixed artifact. They perform what Deleuze calls a **deterritorialization**: they release writing from its conventional territory (the page, the archive, the utilitarian record) and allow it to become something else — ritual, event, contact zone.[18]

Interowriting therefore offers not only an artistic practice but a method of inquiry into writing's nature. By grounding writing in immanence, interoceptive attunement, and performative gesture, it challenges utilitarian and informational models of script and reactivates writing's capacity to suspend, unsettle, and transform. Writing becomes not merely a representation of what already exists but a practice of ungrounding, an opening where meaning, self, and space are continually reconfigured.

Conclusion

To write is to stand in relation — to time, to place, to others, to oneself. What I've tried to offer today is not a definitive theory, but a reorientation: away from writing as a system of signs, and toward writing as a lived event — as *gesture*, as *encounter*, as *rhythm*.

Cursive, graffiti, calligraphy, and the practices of Interowriting all reveal a simple but radical idea: that writing is not something we *have*, it is something we *do*. And in doing it, we inhabit the world differently. We move through it not as detached observers, but as sensing, affecting, responsive bodies.

Interowriting invites us to unlearn some of the habits we've inherited — about clarity, utility, legibility, authorship. It asks: what if writing is not only for conveying meaning, but for holding space? What if it is

not only about leaving a trace, but about making time for presence — for breath, friction, care?

In an age where writing is increasingly flattened into input, optimized, quantified, and archived, reclaiming its embodied, interoceptive dimension becomes an act of resistance — and of imagination. The pen, the brush, the tag — these are not obsolete tools. They are invitations to remember ourselves as rhythmic beings.

Whether on the page, on a wall, or through the body, writing can become again what it has always been at its core: a way of listening to the world, of responding to it, of remaining human within it.

Conflict of Interests

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About the author

Alice is an independent researcher, style-writer, Interowriter, and professional calligrapher. Born in Italy and educated in London, she investigates writing as a material and embodied practice, with a particular focus on rhythm as a tool for exploring the dynamics of form, perception, and meaning. Her work bridges scholarship and artistic practice, positioning writing not only as script but as an intermodal field where gesture, movement, and sound intersect. In addition to research and publication, Alice develops performances and leads Jamigraphy workshops, fostering participatory environments where rhythm reveals writing as a shared, living practice. @alice_seshat

Footnotes

1 - “Taki 183 Spawns Pen Pals.” *The New York Times*, July 21, 1971, p. 37.

2 - PHASE 2. *Spectrum: Kill Tha G-Word. The Italian Years of P.H.A.S.E. 2*. Rome: DRAGO, 2011.

3 - Steven Connor, *The Book of Skin* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 63–85.
This book offers a compelling perspective on the body as a writable surface, where marks and traces bear meaning beyond abstraction. His analysis of skin as both medium and site of identity reinforces my argument that writing originates in material gestures of incision and marking, rather than in disembodied systems of signification.

4 - James Elkins, *The Domain of Images* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 231–245.

5 - Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007)

6 - Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), 12–15.

7 - Billeter, Jean François, The Art of Chinese Writing (1990 New York : Skira/Rizzoli). 79

8 - Hans Joachim Burgert, The calligraphic line. 2nd edition. Translated by Brody Neuenschwander. (1989) 2002

9 - Ella Chmielewska, "Framing [Con]text: Graffiti and Place," *Space and Culture* 10, no. 2 (2007): 145–169.

10 - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), esp. 62–73 on *différance* and the trace.

11 - Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007)

12 - Rammellzee, *Gothic Futurism: Assassin Knowledges of the Remanifestation of Letter* (New York: self-published manifesto, 1983).

13 - Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 35–60. The *plane of immanence* provides a way of thinking writing not as the projection of an isolated subject onto a surface, but as an ongoing field of relations in which marks emerge through gestures, rhythms, and material encounters. This underpins Interowriting's emphasis on writing as a relational event rather than representation.

14 - Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights, 1988), 123.

15 - Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 149–166. The *Body without Organs* resonates with Interowriting's participatory projects, such as *Jamigraphy* and *The Walking Wall*, which dissolve fixed roles of author and audience. These performances create open fields of intensity where writing is continuously reconfigured by the collective presence of gestures, marks, and rhythms. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, they function as assemblages (agencements): temporary gatherings of heterogeneous elements — bodies, sounds, surfaces, movements — that generate new capacities and relations.

16 - Hugo D. Critchley and Sarah N. Garfinkel, "Interoception and Emotion," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 17 (2017): 7–14.

17 - Ibid., 8–10.

18 - Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon Books, 1994), 154–181.

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