

# Manual to Wording Collaborative Writing in Public Space

## **A Manual to Wording – Collaborative Writing in Public Space 2019**

### **Welcome**

Wording is inspired by Georges Perec and his experimental book *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien*, or *An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris*. Perec observed Place Saint-Sulpice in October 1974, and made notes of what he saw. These notes form a kind of an inventory of Place Saint-Sulpice. His idea was to pay attention to the seemingly insignificant, and to notice what is taking place when nothing special is happening. Perec noted down the date, time of day, place and weather, and then went on to write a list of what was happening within his field of vision. He returned on three successive days, and was himself gradually transformed into one of the recurrent figures in the square. His writing work, in turn, successively altered what he was observing; the square became a text and a written rendition of a public space. The approach of Wording matches to a large extent, with the exception that it is a collective act of writing. The aim of Wording is to further develop and investigate this method of writing in public space.

Wording is an attempt to make a public place accessible in words. Returning to the same public place during three days in a row has a purpose. The writer not only returns to the place, but also to the text and the act of writing. In this way a relation, a dialogue, and maybe also a transformation, is formed between the elements at stake.

Returning raises insight in the seemingly unimportant events, the infra-ordinary as Perec would say, and is also a tool for discovering repetitive patterns. In short, the thought is less to compare different public spaces, and more to share how we perceive what occurs during the course of three days.

Since it is impossible to write down everything that happens in one's surroundings, the writing becomes a series of choices. These choices are highlighted when writing in the same place. Wording is about learning to be aware of these choices and questions if there is a possibility that the physical senses perceive in a categoric mode.

One of the challenges is to stay in an observational mode and focus on experiencing. The intent is to avoid story-telling, fiction writing, assumptions and opinions, and

instead really try to stay close to the experience of public space by writing. One way to think about the writing is that it is guided by the bodily senses.

Another challenge is to keep the text as it is and not to rewrite or shorten it. The aim is to give the text a quality of a carbon copy or a textual imprint of what is recognised by the senses and then transformed into words.

**You are ready to start when you have read, signed and forwarded the attached or emailed agreement to [wording2019\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:wording2019(at)gmail.com)**

**Choose a public space to observe during 12-14 of June and a language to write in, including made-up ones. Write in the same public space during the three days. It is up to you to decide on how much and how often you write.**

**Notate where you write, the date & time when you start and stop, and your name each session. As an example:**

***Karhupuisto in Helsinki, 12/6/2019, 8:15-10:20, Miina Pyöränen.***

***(next time)***

***Karhupuisto in Helsinki, 12/6/2019, 13:05-14:20, Miina Pyöränen.***

**It is important that you mention this information each time you write. It will function as a guideline to a forthcoming designed work with our notations from Wording 2019. This second part is depending of external financing such as a grant.**

**Email the typed texts by the 25th of June 2019 to [wording2019\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:wording2019(at)gmail.com)**