

# Letter from the Editors

Isaac Linder, Paul Boshears, Jamie Allen

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As Gadamer reflects in *The Beginning of Knowledge*, "Anyone who has ever been a guest in Heidegger's hut in Todtnauberg [to be so lucky!] recalls the saying scratched into a piece of bark and placed above the lintel: *ta de panta oiakizei keraunos*; 'Lightning steers all' (Heraclitus, Fragment 64)." Fulgurites, sometimes referred to as petrified lightning, are the evidentiary traces of lightning strikes left as mineraloid debris on beaches, or soil, where the strike has occurred with a temperature of at least 1,800 °C (3,270 °F). Today, as markets crash at speeds faster than human thought, Quentin Meillassoux argues that the laws of nature must be considered to be able to change at a moment's notice. As fulgurites are formed in a second's time, like an error in a spreadsheet left to our retrospective perplexity...

The figure of the fulgurite—like the open space in which the lightning strikes, a piece of land art (Walter De Maria's "Lightning Field"), a reflection (our teacher Christopher Fynsk's reflections on a visit to De Maria's site), a fiction (Victor Salva's 1995 film *Powder*), the physiological trauma incurred on a body by any manner of blow, or the historical record through which we glean access to the texts of antiquity—is a material record, an artifactual impression of an absent referent guiding our meticulous work; work following "the abrupt lightning-filled elucidation that makes everything visible in one stroke, yet in such a way that the darkness immediately engulfs it again" (Gadamer). For Gadamer, the aim—"the dark task"—of Heidegger's thought is precisely that "insoluble unity and duality of revealing and concealing, light and darkness, into which human thinking finds itself interpolated."

And so in this issue we present a sheaf of fulgurites, a collection of shadows of events, analogues of epiphany and accretion, into which we find ourselves interpolated and can only but follow with the fidelity of our own gradual movements and responses.

Lastly, looking toward other splinters of light, we present the work of Carl Emil Carlsen, who has illustrated the icons for this next issue, derived from the text of each piece:

*The images illustrate the texts in this issue of continent., stripped from all qualitative information. Starting from the centre and spiralling out, every word is represented by a box. The more times a word is repeated the further it is pushed into the background, in effect placing it*

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*under the shadows of surrounding words. The result is a crude analysis of the novelty of words as they are introduced in the texts, giving a quantitative fingerprint of the authors vocabulary richness.*

*As a reader, and a living organism in general, recurrent events tend to gradually fall into a self evident background while our conscious attention is given mostly to novel events. While this is useful for filtering the stream of information that make up our lives it also restrains us from reevaluating the fundamental semantics from which we build understanding. Automation comes at the price of consciousness. — C.E.C*

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