

## Alphabetum IV: Missing Scripts – The Proposals Johannes Bergerhausen & Ilka Helmig

Exhibition: 28.09.2019 – 24.11.2019 – Opening: 28.09.2019, 20:00 hrs.

Location: West Museumkwartier, former American embassy, Lange Voorhout 102, The Hague

More information: [www.westdenhaag.nl](http://www.westdenhaag.nl)

**The computer we work with on a daily basis contains an infinite amount of information. It seems seemingly logical that we can communicate with only a few dozen keys. We can even, at the push of a button, convert characters to another language. This is only possible through strict agreements with designers, hardware and software developers.**

Unicode Standard 12.1, published in May 2019, encodes more than 137,000 characters from exactly 150 writing systems that can be used on a computer. This includes the Emoji that are used worldwide and new characters are added every year. On our computers, Latin letters, Chinese ideograms and even extinct cuneiform characters can be used. But which scripts are still missing? Bergerhausen and Helmig focus on the unknown and obscure script systems. The exhibition 'Missing Scripts' shows proposals that have been submitted to the Unicode Consortium but have not (yet) been included in the Standard.

In this way Bergerhausen and Helmig stimulate a discussion about the cultural heritage of writing, the existing overviews of written languages, the digitisation of the languages of the world and the lack of typographical forms for so-called 'non-Latin' or 'minority' scripts. What is a script? How many people speak which language? And what are the missing scripts?

Missing Scripts is the third project in the Alphabetum and has been compiled by designer researcher Johannes Bergerhausen and artist Ilka Helmig. Johannes Bergerhausen's work was part of exhibitions at Gwang Ju Design Biennale, South Korea 2019; Fikra Design Biennale, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates 2018; Type Directors Club Tokyo, Japan, 2014; MCAST, Malta 2010; Goethe Institute, Berlin 2006. In addition, he has won several international awards, published publications and is teaching as a professor at Hochschule Mainz; ANRT in Nancy, France. Ilka Helmig has a.o. had solo exhibitions in Basement Gallery, Essen, Germany 2019; Karst Gallery, Plymouth; United Kingdom 2018; Ludwig Forum für internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany, 2013; KleppArt Gallery, Paderborn, Germany 2012; Bienal internacional de la Pintura, Cuenca, Ecuador 2007 and group exhibitions in Fabrique de A'rt, Paris, France, 2019; NAK, Aachen, Germany, 2015; Museo Antropológico y de Arte Contemporáneo, Guayaquil, Ecuador, 2008.

This project has been developed in collaboration with the Institute for Design Gutenberg (IDG), Mainz, Mainz, Germany, Atelier National de Recherche Typographique (ANRT), Nancy, France and the Script Encoding Initiative (SEI), Berkeley, USA.

The Alphabetum is a space to explore the formative and formal aspects of language. The ambition of the Alphabetum is to show that these two characteristics of written language are much more connected than is generally acknowledged. A letter is a letter because we recognize it as a letter; and because we recognize it as a letter it is a letter.

If you have any questions, please contact MJ Sondejker: [marie-jose@westdenhaag.nl](mailto:marie-jose@westdenhaag.nl) of (0)70.3925359

The former American embassy 'Onze Ambassade' is temporarily managed by ANNA Vastgoed & Cultuur Art Institute West Den Haag. The program of West is supported by the municipality of The Hague and the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science