



SHAKESPEARE 36
2015, double duraclear transparencies in lightbox, 230 x 122 cm (approx 90 x 48 in)

PRESS RELEASE

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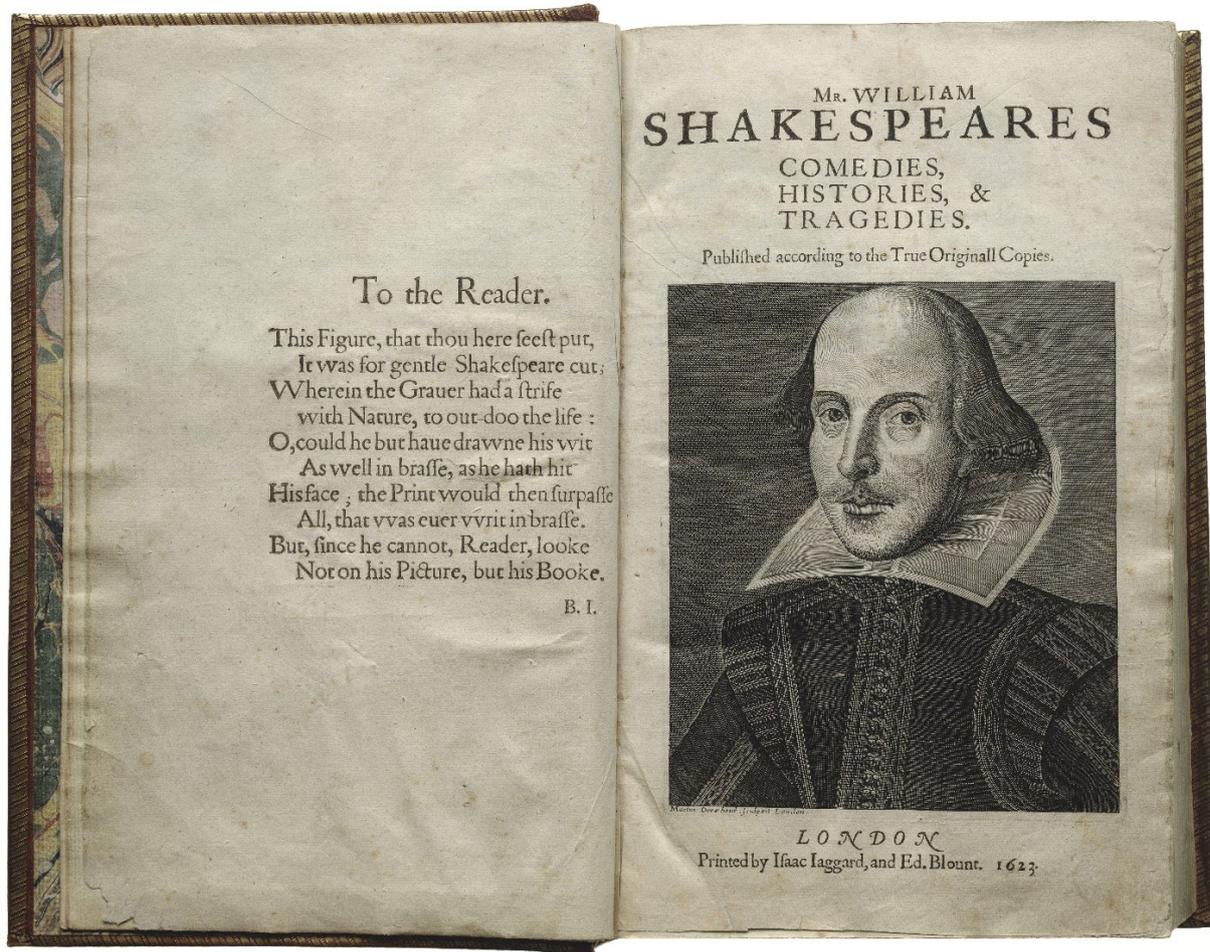
Shakespeare in Colour

- The artist Benjamin Samuel created a light installation based on the entire text of William Shakespeare's 36 plays included in the first folio edition of 1623
- The work entitled SHAKESPEARE 36 was first presented in late 2015 in Benjamin Samuel's solo exhibition ARRAYS OF LIGHT at the Heussenstamm gallery in Frankfurt
- 2016 is Shakespeare-year, honoring the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

Shakespeare shared the sensibility for colour in his time, the Elizabethan era. He loved the rich, vibrant colours and played with their diversity. In his plays this affinity found its expression in the subtle tension created by sophisticated lighting effects.

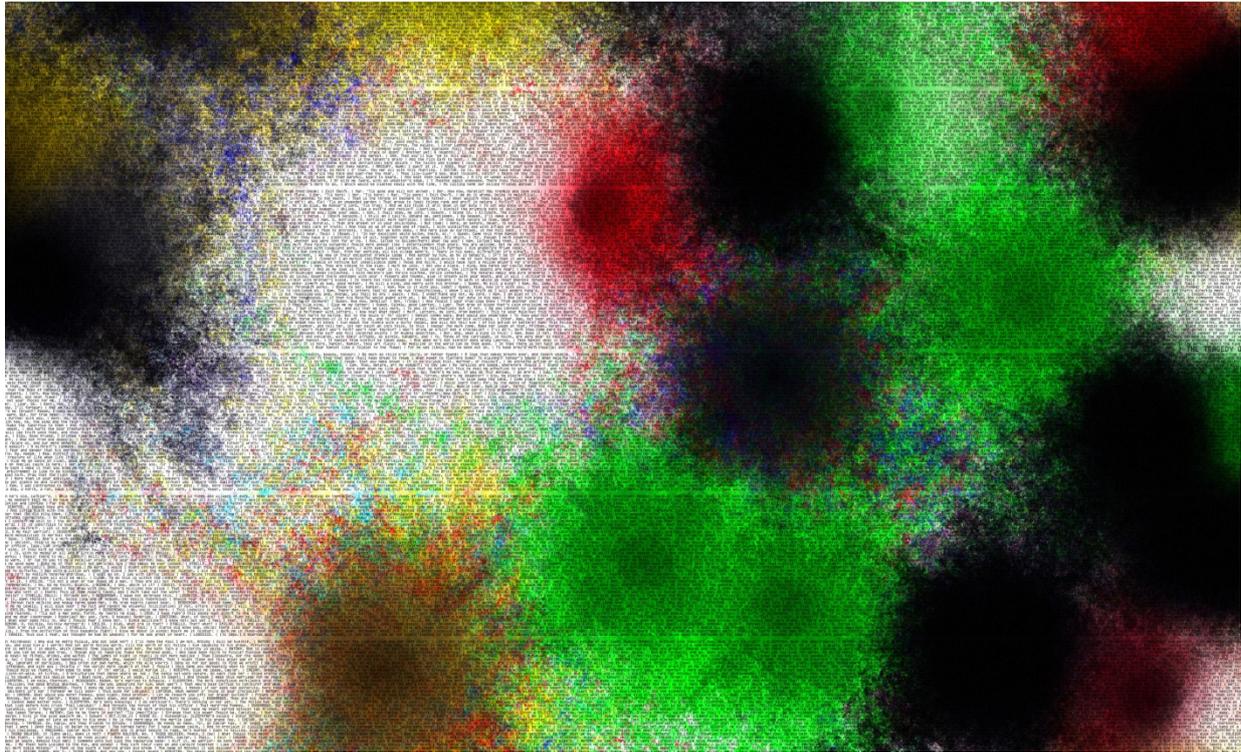
The new-media artist Benjamin Samuel picked up on Shakespeare's play of colours by taking the entire text of the 36 plays published in the first folio edition of 1623 as the basis for his own, independent, visual work. (The so-called "First Folio" includes the first complete edition of William

Shakespeare's plays which was published seven years after the death of the bard. (See Wikipedia entry for [First Folio](#)) For the production of his work, Benjamin Samuel used two superposed layers of slide film, held together in a metal frame and backlit with LED lights.



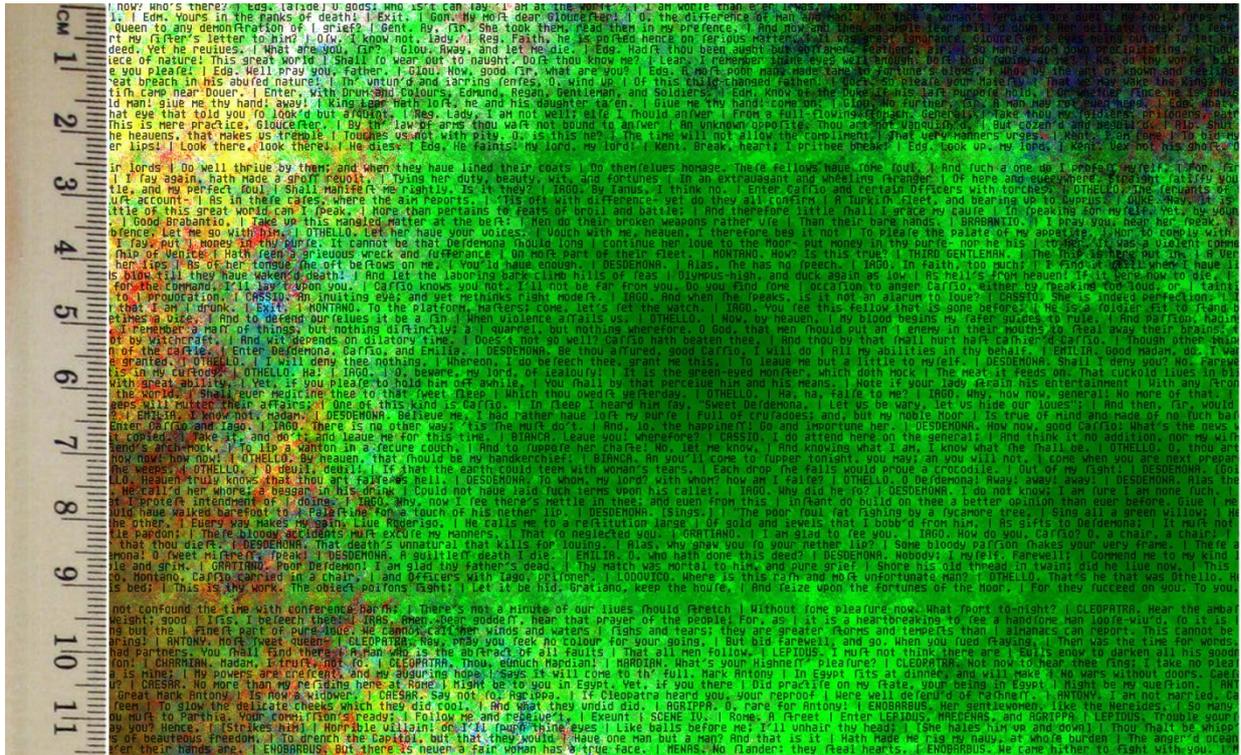
Shakespeare's First Folio, 1623
Images, see: [The Bodleian First Folio](#)

The front plane of his work depicts, in tiny, sharply exposed, precision-set characters (4,939,199 in total), the entire drama text of the master, so that it is possible for the observer to grasp the written words at a glance. The rear glass level transforms Shakespeare's joy of colour words and verbal acrobatics: whenever a specific colour term is used in the text, it liquefies and breaks out at that location, mixing with adjacent colours to create a swirl of blended hues. This effect, the artist achieved by employing random walk algorithms.



SHAKESPEARE 36

Detailed view of the backlit work: Overlaid text and colour layers.



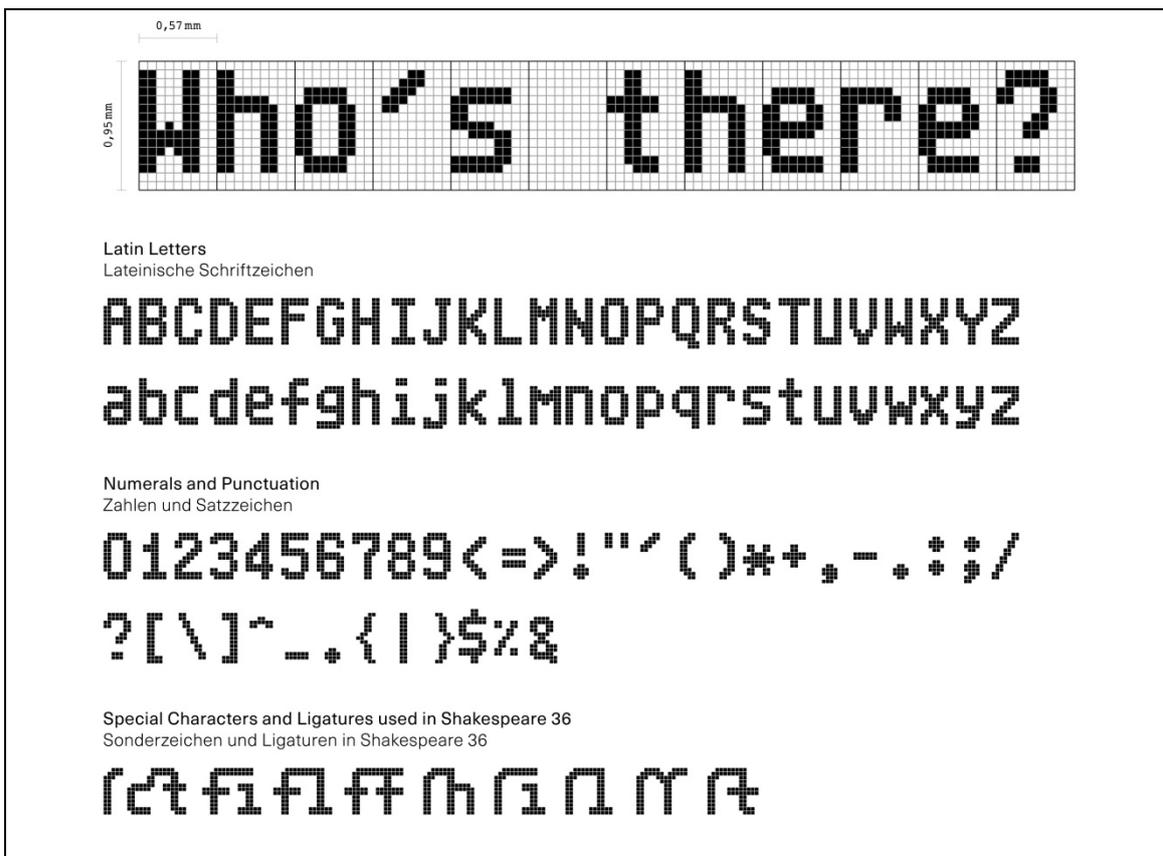
SHAKESPEARE 36

Greatly enlarged detailed view, including a ruler as a scale reference, each letter is approx. 1 mm (³/₆₄ in) in height

This detail depicts a section of Othello: „O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed monster“

To display the text, on a panel roughly 3 m² (=32 ft²) in area, as sharp as possible and still readable at that tiny scale, Benjamin Samuel solved this challenge by developing and designing the pixel-based font himself. Each letter is roughly 1 mm in height (=3/64 in). Special care was given by Benjamin Samuel to include a set of ligatures used also in the font of the original first folio. Ligatures are

typographic letter-composites where two or more letters merge to form a single character, popular in printing techniques of the Elizabethan era.



The pixel-based, monospace font, developed by Benjamin Samuel for the work SHAKESPEARE 36

Benjamin Samuel unravelled the diversity of colour mentioned in Shakespeare's text by employing a search algorithm, meticulously searching for every colour term. The words searched for included not only primary colours such as "red", "green" or "blue" but also specific colour terms such as "emerald", "russet" or "azure", for example, and, whenever found, he made them explode visually at the given text passage. The text plane withdraws discreetly, making way for a game of colours. The viewer perceives an original work, detached and independent. At a first, vague glance, the play of colour seems random and abstract, but at a closer look, the viewer discovers gradually that the work is based strictly on Shakespeare's textual framework, which shines through, here and there.

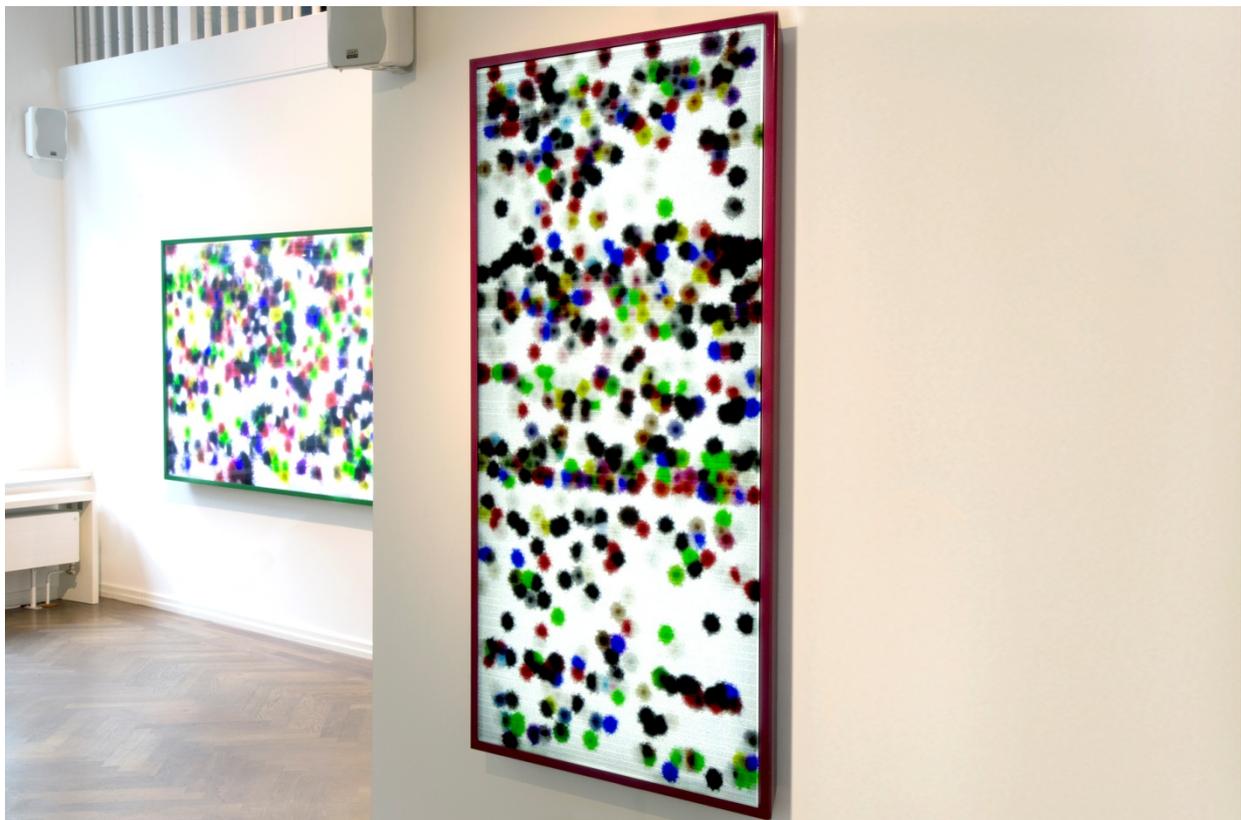
#1	brown	(4035-4039)	"... sea for an acre of barren ground-long heath, BROWN furze, any thing. The
#2	blue	(17370-17373)	"... this true? ARIEL. Ay, sir. PROSPERO. This BLUE-ey'd hag was hither brough
#3	red	(22129-22131)	"... on't Is, I know how to curse. The RED plague rid you For learning me you
#4	yellow	(22787-22792)	"... FERDINAND following ARIEL'S SONG. Come unto these YELLOW sands, And the
#5	green	(31191-31195)	"... GONZALO. How lush and lusty the grass looks! how GREEN! ANTONIO. The ground
#6	tawny	(31230-31234)	"... looks! how green! ANTONIO. The ground indeed is TAWNY. SEBASTIAN. With ar
#7	green	(31265-31269)	"... indeed is tawny. SEBASTIAN. With an eye of GREEN in't. ANTONIO. He misses
#8	black	(45489-45493)	"... hear it sing i' th' wind. Yond same BLACK cloud, yond huge one, looks lik
#9	white	(74186-74190)	"... vow! FERDINAND. I warrant you, sir, The WHITE cold virgin snow upon my he
#10	saffron	(75335-75341)	"... disobey the wife of Jupiter; Who, with thy SAFFRON wings, upon my flow'rs
#11	blue	(75438-75441)	"... refreshing show'rs; And with each end of thy BLUE bow dost crown My bosk!
#12	green	(75592-75596)	"... thy Queen Summon'd me hither to this short-grass'd GREEN? IRIS. A contrac
#13	green	(77755-77759)	"... looks, Leave your crisp channels, and on this GREEN land Answer your sum
#14	red	(79996-79998)	"... varlets? ARIEL. I told you, sir, they were RED-hot with drinking; So full
#15	green	(86709-86713)	"... back; you demi-puppets that By moonshine do the GREEN sour ringlets make,
#16	green	(86990-86994)	"... call'd forth the mutinous winds, And ,twixt the GREEN sea and the azur'd va
#17	white	(130284-130288)	"... my sister, for, look you, she is as WHITE as a lily and as small as a wand;
#18	swart	(145346-145350)	"... that made her fair!- Shows Julia but a SWARTHy Ethiop. I will forget the
#19	black	(155093-155097)	"... praise, commend, extol their graces; Though ne'er so BLACK, say they have a
#20	white	(160650-160654)	"... knees, her humble self, Wringing her hands, whose WHITEness so became them
#21	pale	(160702-160705)	"... became them As if but now they waxed PALE for woe. But neither bended kn
#22	milkwhite	(161717-161721)	"... to me, shall be deliver'd Even in the milk-WHITE bosom of thy love. The t
#23	black	(163361-163365)	"... news, then, in your paper? LAUNCE. The BLACK'st news that ever thou hear
#24	black	(163423-163427)	"... that ever thou heard'st. SPEED. Why, man? how BLACK? LAUNCE. Why, as blac
#25	black	(163448-163452)	"... SPEED. Why, man? how black? LAUNCE. Why, as BLACK as ink. SPEED. Let me r
#26	black	(191238-191242)	"... her face, That now she is become as BLACK as I. SILVIA. How tall was she!
#27	auburn	(192670-192675)	"... flatter with myself too much. Her hair is AUBURN, mine is perfect yellow;

The search algorithm at work: searching for every text location of a specific colour term

When analyzing the frequency of the primary colours used by Shakespeare, black and white not considered, one finds what immediately becomes evident when viewing SHAKESPEARE 36: that Shakespeare had a preference for the colour green. Reasons for this penchant likely includes the expression of emotional feelings conveyed by the colour green, representing hope, rebirth, youth and stability. Increasing the tension and heightening the ambivalence of his words, green, however, can also represent the danger in the sense of bright green poisons or as a symbol of political tension between England and Ireland.

The corresponding work *POE 69 ½*

The work SHAKESPEARE 36 is part of his series entitled ARRAYS OF LIGHT. In this series, the artist works with source material from various fields and represents a pair in dialog. The corresponding work to SHAKESPEARE 36 is his work entitled POE 69½ which includes the text of 69 completed tales and one unfinished tale by the American writer Edgar Allen Poe.



POE 69 ½
2015, double duraclear transparencies in lightbox, 166 x 83 cm (approx. 65 x 32 in)
Photo: Daniel Koren

The series ARRAYS OF LIGHT includes 10 works, confronting the plays of Shakespeare with the tales of Edgar Allen Poe or the Goldberg Variations by Bach with the Diabelli Variations by Ludwig van Beethoven. He depicts the stock market prices of the Dow Jones Industrial and the German stock index in the year of the global financial crisis 2008, visually against each other, the comic book world of Astérix and Tintin or the films of Alfred Hitchcock and Stanley Kubrick. Thus, an examination of the works and their authors was converted into colour schemes that reflect the mood and the time of the respective source material.

The catalogue of works ARRAYS OF LIGHT



Arrays of Light
Published in 2015 by DISTANZ, Berlin

In September 2015, Benjamin Samuel's catalog of works [ARRAYS OF LIGHT](#) was published by DISTANZ, Berlin. The works are presented thematically, explained and derived historically, enriched with casual and humorous conversations between Benjamin Samuel and individuals who grapple with the same works scientifically and artistically, such as with the American jazz pianist Uri Caine, who recorded the Goldberg and the Diabelli Variations, with Anthea Bell, the British translator of the Astérix comics and with the LA-based film critic Dan Auiler, author of the book "Vertigo: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic". The foreword was written by Prof. Dr. Henry Keazor, art historian at the University of Heidelberg, who had published and edited a book on Alfred Hitchcock and the Arts in 2013.

Shakespeare-year 2016

2016 is Shakespeare-year, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the playwright worldwide. For more information, see:

<http://www.shakespeare400.org/>

<http://shakespeares-england.co.uk/shakespeare-2016>

<http://www.shakespearelives.org/>

About Benjamin Samuel



Portrait Benjamin Samuel
Photo: Birgit Hupfeld

Benjamin Samuel is the nom de plume of Benjamin Samuel Koren. He was born in 1981 in Frankfurt, grew up in Miami, Florida and studied architecture, film and music at New York University, the University of Miami, the Architectural Association in London and the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. He currently lives and works in Frankfurt. In 2012, the German Film Museum acquired two light installations by the artist, HITCHCOCK 30 and KUBRICK 13+9+10, which are permanently exhibited in the foyer of the museum in Frankfurt. He also works as a specialist for complex geometries on architectural projects, such as the Elbphilharmonie Concert Hall in Hamburg, the Philharmonie de Paris or the Louvre Abu Dhabi.

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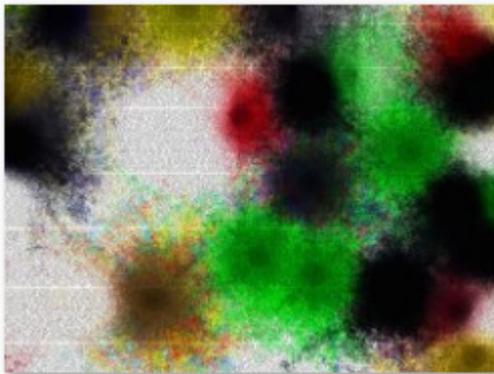
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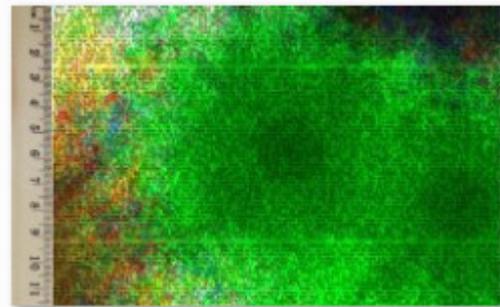
SHAKESPEARE 36
Benjamin Samuel, 2015
Photo: Daniel Koren



SHAKESPEARE 36
Benjamin Samuel, 2010



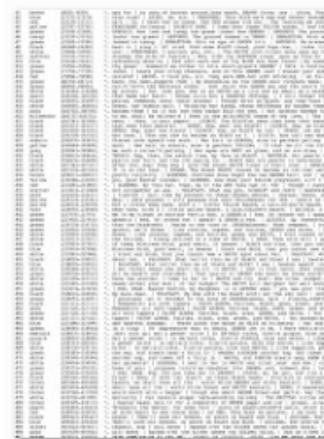
SHAKESPEARE 36
Detailed View, Benjamin Samuel, 2015



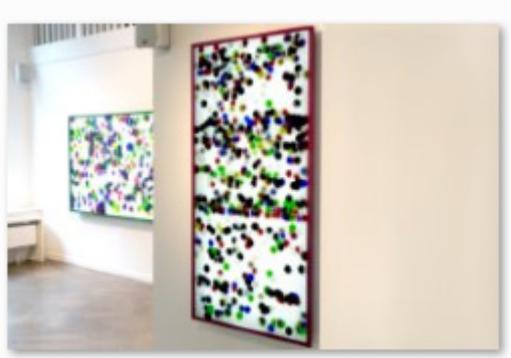
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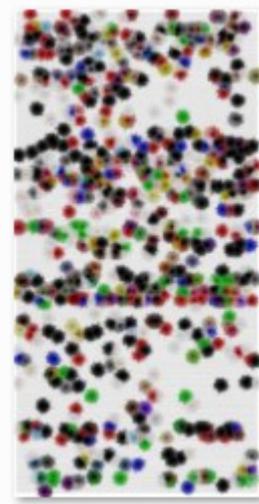
SHAKESPEARE 36 – Miniature font
Benjamin Samuel, 2015



SHAKESPEARE 36 – Search algorithm
Benjamin Samuel, 2015



POE 6g½
Benjamin Samuel, 2015
Photo: Daniel Koren



POE 6g½
Benjamin Samuel, 2015



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Portrait Benjamin Samuel
Photo: Birgit Hupfeld