

# What Was “Conceptual Writing”?

a review by **Richard Kostelanetz** (April 2016)

One of the curious cultural phenomena of our time is that radical epithets developed in the rather small audience for visual art acquire a prestige that gives them appeal to other arts with larger audiences. Though “Minimal Art,” coined in the early 1960s, described visual art with remarkably little surface content, often monochromic for painting or unadorned geometries for sculpture, the epithet minimal was appropriated by music publicists in the 1970s mostly to describe compositions of, say, Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and Terry Riley that were less minimal than modular, with motifs or modules repeated in various ways. [more>>>](#)