

## Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings

Robert K. Logan

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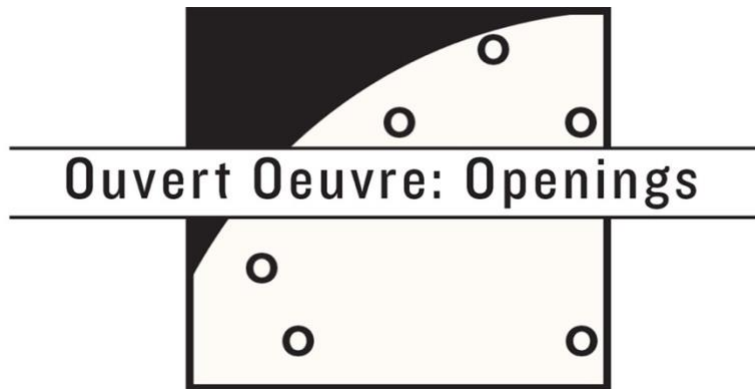
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# Warren Lehrer

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## Downloadable Press Kit

[Images, Audio & Video Clips, Press Release](#)

## Upcoming Live Events

(Coming Soon!)

## Early Praise

"*Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings*, a vivid new graphic-text collaboration by poet-theorist Adeena Karasick and writer-designer Warren Lehrer, has the subtitle, "in the wake of the virus," marking our distance from lockdown. Return and reawakening register in subtle observations of "opening" so that the earlier closing is implied rather than addressed. We are back in the world, sort-of, through milestones and marked moments in which the concept of "open" carries a variety of meanings.

I have been a fan of Lehrer's work for decades and was recently introduced to Karasick's writings through her *Massaging the Medium: Seven Pechakuchas*, one of the few books by someone else I ever wished I had written. This new collaboration by Lehrer and Karasick provides an opportunity to think about the way the design of language transforms and informs a work.

The book is divided into two parts each with its own poem. The first, *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings*, contains seven "openings." The second poem *Touching in the Wake of the Virus*, subtitled "A Panddendum" focuses on navigating touch.

Lehrer's visualization plays with motifs that proliferate in Karasick's text. Polyglot resonances reflect

the global reach of the virus... patterns of sonic effects... air bubbles and exclamations effervesce... erotic play and sexual associations culminate in the corona virus floating through and across the space. Vectors of force and torque instantiate a text that also has edges and conflicts, interruptions and disruptions, and careens towards its final statement.

This collaboration creates a new work, distinctly shaped, strikingly formed, a work worth looking at and reading as—not through—its graphical language. Nothing in the final project feels like a wrong note or mistake. *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings* is a vivid book, vibrant and attractive, and handled with suppleness.”

**Johanna Drucker**, [JD: ABCs Newsletter](#), Substack

*“An arresting attempt to put collective pain and healing on the page.*

In many ways, the Covid-19 pandemic has thrust deconstruction upon the world, unraveling beliefs and allowing people to see the world with new eyes—whether they want to or not. Karasick’s poems and Lehrer’s images of textual choreography deal with what emerging from a long, isolating quarantine feels like ‘in the today of wild touching; / the today of withholding, the today of / passionate rations.’

...Karasick often uses alliteration and sonic association, using language to represent this slow re-entry—the kinetic chaos of relearning one another. Lehrer makes a performance out of form... forcing the eye to sweep across unpredictable, textured pages when Karasick’s speakers lament their physical alienation... This collaboration keenly embodies a collective trauma that eludes a singular definition.”

[Kirkus Reviews](#) (Starred Review)

“A true masterpiece of linguistic play and exploration! Karasick and Lehrer have created an exceptional work that deserves recognition for its innovative approach to language, masterful use of visual and literary techniques, and its contribution to the ongoing conversation about language, media, and culture.”

**Paolo Granata**, Professor, Book and Media Studies, University of Toronto

“Recommended for all poetry lovers... In *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings*, words capture the complexity and richness of touch, with its ability to connect us to others, to leave a lasting impression, and bring pleasure and joy... from a reader’s mind and a wardrobe, to the sea and a microphone...

Transformative and deeply rewarding.”

**Ruchi Agarwal** *Pegasus Literary*

“Like slowed-down Joyce, with less inscrutable puns but equally high-powered formulas and searing insights, *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings* deserves our utmost attention. A deftly wrought and groundbreakingly crucial volume.”

**Derrick de Kerckhove**, author of *The Skin of Culture* and *Connected Intelligence*

Punning with conceptual condensations until pleasures become fireworks, joyously singing the language dynamic, displaying heartfelt learning, sexy switch-ups and flights of insight, this work is a gasp-worthy balance of poetic eros, theoretical intelligence, and luminous suspicion. An all-round original book, here the sacred, the playful, the Kabbalah and the female are flying high in polymorphous boldness. A hell of a book. Karasick blasts on all her cylinders!

**Rachel Blau DuPlessis**, poet-critic

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**Adeena Karasick**, Ph.D., is a New York based Canadian poet, performer, cultural theorist and media artist and the author of 14 books of poetry and poetics. Her Kabbalistically inflected, urban, Jewish feminist mashups have been described as “electricity in language” (Nicole Brossard), “proto-ecstatic jet-

propulsive word torsion” (George Quasha), noted for their “cross-fertilization of punning and knowing, theatre and theory” (Charles Bernstein), “a twined virtuosity of mind and ear which leaves the reader deliciously lost in Karasick’s signature ‘syllabic labyrinth’” (Craig Dworkin). Other publications include *Ærotomania: The Book of Luminations* (Lavender Ink, 2023); *Massaging the Medium: 7 Pechakuchas* (The Institute of General Semantics Press, 2022) *Checking In* (Talonbooks, 2018); *SALOMÉ: Woman of Valor* (University of Padova Press, Italy, 2017), and CD, (NuJu Records, 2020). Karasick teaches Literature and Critical Theory for the Humanities and Media Studies Dept. at Pratt Institute; is Poetry Editor for *Explorations in Media Ecology*; Associate International Editor of *New Explorations: Studies in Culture and Communication*; 2021 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Award recipient; winner of the Voce Donna Italia Award for her contributions to feminist thinking; winner of 2023 Susanne K. Langer Award for Outstanding Scholarship (MEA), and 2023 Poet Laureate of the Institute of General Semantics. The “Adeena Karasick Archive” is established at Special Collections, Simon Fraser University.

[Adeena Karasick website](#)

### [Warren Lehrer Bio](#)

**Frank London** is a Grammy-award winning composer, trumpeter and innovative force in Jazz, Klezmer, New Music, and World Music. A founding member of The Klezmatics, Hasidic New Wave, and Frank London’s Klezmer Brass Allstars, he has performed with John Zorn, LL Cool J, Mel Torme, Lester Bowie’s Brass Fantasy, Itzhak Perlman, LaMonte Young, They Might Be Giants, Jane Siberry, Ben Folds 5, Mark Ribot, Maurice El Medioni and Gal Costa, and is featured on over 500 records. His projects include the folk-opera *A Night in the Old Marketplace*; *1001 Voices: A Symphony for a New America* with Judith Sloan and Warren Lehrer; *SALOMÉ: Woman of Valor* with Adeena Karasick. He was music director for David Byrne and Robert Wilson’s *The Knee Plays*. His many film scores include John Sayles’ *The Brother From Another Planet* and *Men With Guns*, Yvonne Rainer’s *Murder and Murder*, Maxim Pozdorovkin’s *The Conspiracy*.

### FALL TOUR SCHEDULE

**Wed. Sept. 6, 4:30pm** Karasick performs *Ærotomania* & *Openings* In Times Square 43<sup>rd</sup> & Broadway Stage (by big Flag), NYC

**Mon. Sept. 11, 7pm** Karasick at Bar 718, 718 5th Ave, **Boog City Fest**, Park Slope, NY

**Thurs. Sept. 21, 1:30-2:30pm** Walt Whitman Initiative **American Love Speaker Series** [Containing Multitudes: The Visual Literature of Warren Lehrer](#), with Adeena Karasick, WWI YouTube Channel

**Sun. Oct. 1, 6pm** (with Jeffrey Cyphers Wright and Heller Levinson) **P & T Bookstore** Presented by Word Shed NYC, 180 Orchard St. NYC

**Fri. Oct. 6, 7pm** \*\*\*\* [OUVERT OEUVRE: OPENINGS](#) \*\*\*\* [BOOK LAUNCH PARTY](#) \*\*\*\*  
Karasick/Lehrer, **Center for Book Arts** Moderated by CBA Director Corina Reynolds, 28 West 27<sup>th</sup> St. NYC. Admission is free but seating is limited so please register in advance at the link above.

**Thurs. Oct. 12** Lehrer presents at **AIGA National Conference** View from Here, *LENS Symposium*, Reconsideration of Vis Lit History, Sheraton Time Square, NYC

**Fri. Oct. 13** Karasick presents *Openings* & *Ærotomania* at **New York State Communication Association Annual Conference: Communication in a Digital World**, Villa Roma, Catskills, NY.

**Thurs. Oct 19, 6pm** Maine Writers & Publishers Association **Word Literary Festival**, Lehrer &

Karasick, Cynthia Winings Gallery, Blue Hill, Maine. Also Featured in Word. Art. Exhibition.

**Sat. Oct. 28, 2pm** Negotiating Deepfakes... as read through *Checking In 2*, **The 71st Annual Institute for General Semantics Symposium**, Players Club, 16 Gramercy Park South, NYC

**Thurs. Nov. 9, 7pm** Karasick with Lehrer, **Tolstoy's Lounge @ The Russian Samovar** 256 W. 52nd St, NYC

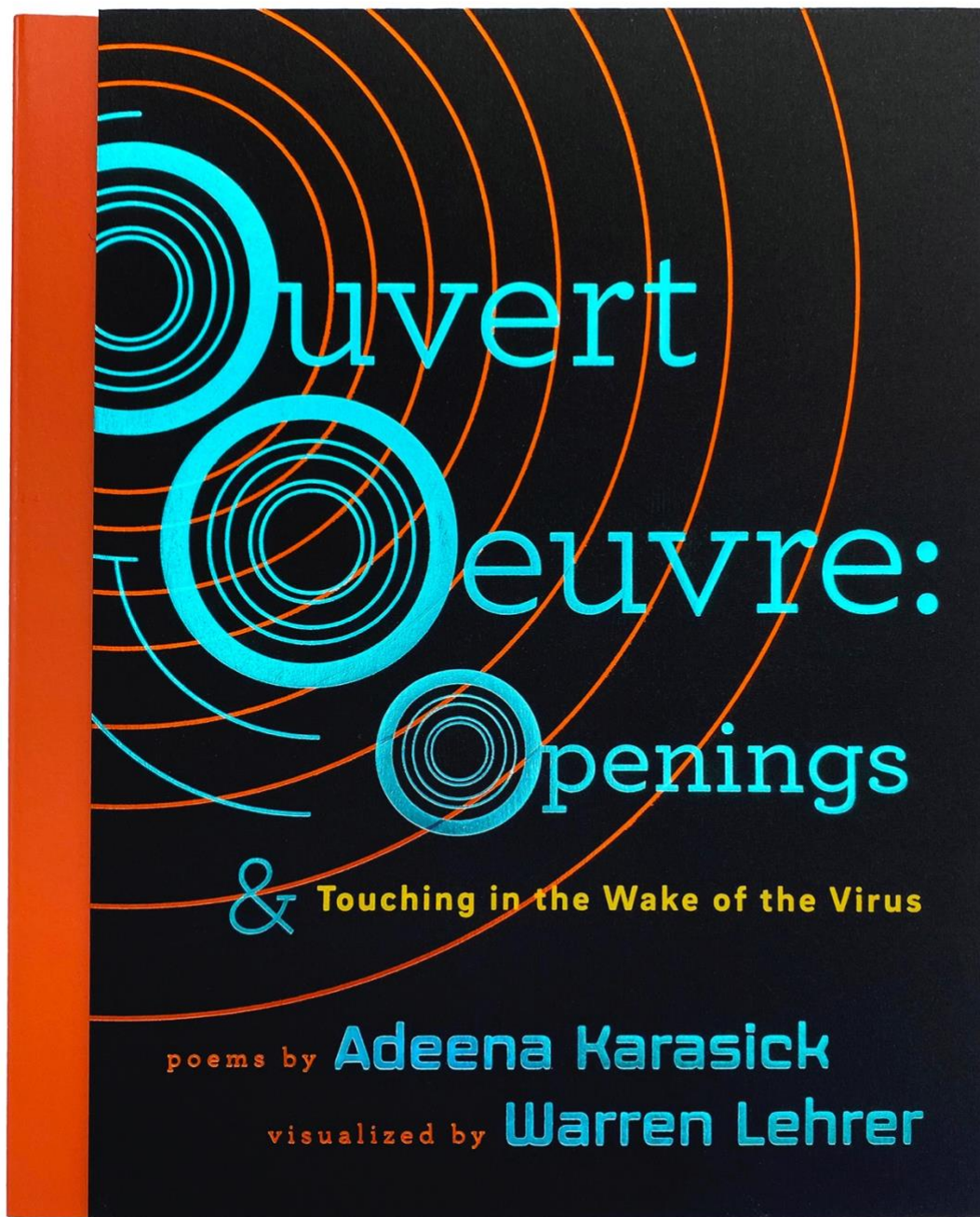
**Sun. Dec. 3, 6pm**, Karasick with Lehrer, **Torn Page Salon**, 435 W. 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave, NYC

2024 touring schedule includes reading/performances in Australia, Italy, France, Woodland Pattern in Milwaukee and at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York.

*Stay tuned for more info...*

Past pre-launch reading/performances of *Ouvert Oeuvre* include: Aug 3, Massy Arts, Vancouver, BC; July 22, Le Petit Versailles Garden, NYC; June 25, Annual Media Ecology Association Convention, Fordham U; June 3, Secret Handshake Gallery, Toronto; May 6 & May 20, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, NY.





Poems written by **Adeena Karasick**. Book visualized by **Warren Lehrer**.

Published by Lavender Ink Press. October, 2023.

6.25" x 8" x 96 pages. 3-color foil-stamped, 3-piece Hardcover binding, Smyth-sewn, printed on acid-free, archival paper, black and white interior.

ISBN: 978-1-956921-13-7

***Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings*** is a collaboration between acclaimed poet, performer, cultural theorist and media artist **Adeena Karasick**, and designer/author and vis lit pioneer **Warren Lehrer**. Inscribing what the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas might call "espace vital" (the space we can survive), the two poems that embody this work form an ecstatically wrought exploration of re-entering the world after a pandemic that never seems to end.

The title poem and *Touching in the Wake of the Virus* track trepidations and celebrations of openings read through socio-economic, geographic and bodily space. Both poems explore a range of intralingual etymologies laced with post-consumerist and erotic language, theoretical discourse, philosophical and Kabbalistic aphorisms. They foreground language and book-space as organisms of hope—highlighting the concept of opening and touching as an ever-swirling palimpsest of spectral voices, textures, whispers and codes transported through passion, politics and pleasure as we negotiate loss and light.

In this first collaborative book, Lehrer choreographs Karasick's words on the stage of the page through typographic compositions that give form to the emotional, metaphorical, historical and sonic underpinnings of the texts. His sensuous, textural, textual settings diagram themes within the poems like approach/withdrawal, navigating between and through a landscape of barriers and openings, seeking intimacy, fearing/daring to touch and be touched. Together, the writing and visuals engage the reader to become an active participant in the experience/performance of the work.

The book also comes with a soundtrack recording (via QR code to Soundcloud page) of Karasick reading the poems with music composed and performed by Grammy award-winning composer and trumpet player, **Sir Frank London**.

Exquisitely produced—in a symth-sewn, 3-color foil-stamped, 3-piece hardcover binding, printed on acid-free paper, ***Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings*** is made for lovers of beautiful (yet affordable) books, boundary-pushing poetry, art, design, philosophy, performance, and anyone trying to navigate opening and touching in the wake of pandemics and other mass maladies.

Founded by Bill Lavender in 1995 in New Orleans, **Lavender Ink** publishes mostly American poetry, fiction and nonfiction, with a mission to change the world through cross-culturally significant literature.

***Buy the Book!***

**Signed Copies** [from the Authors](#)

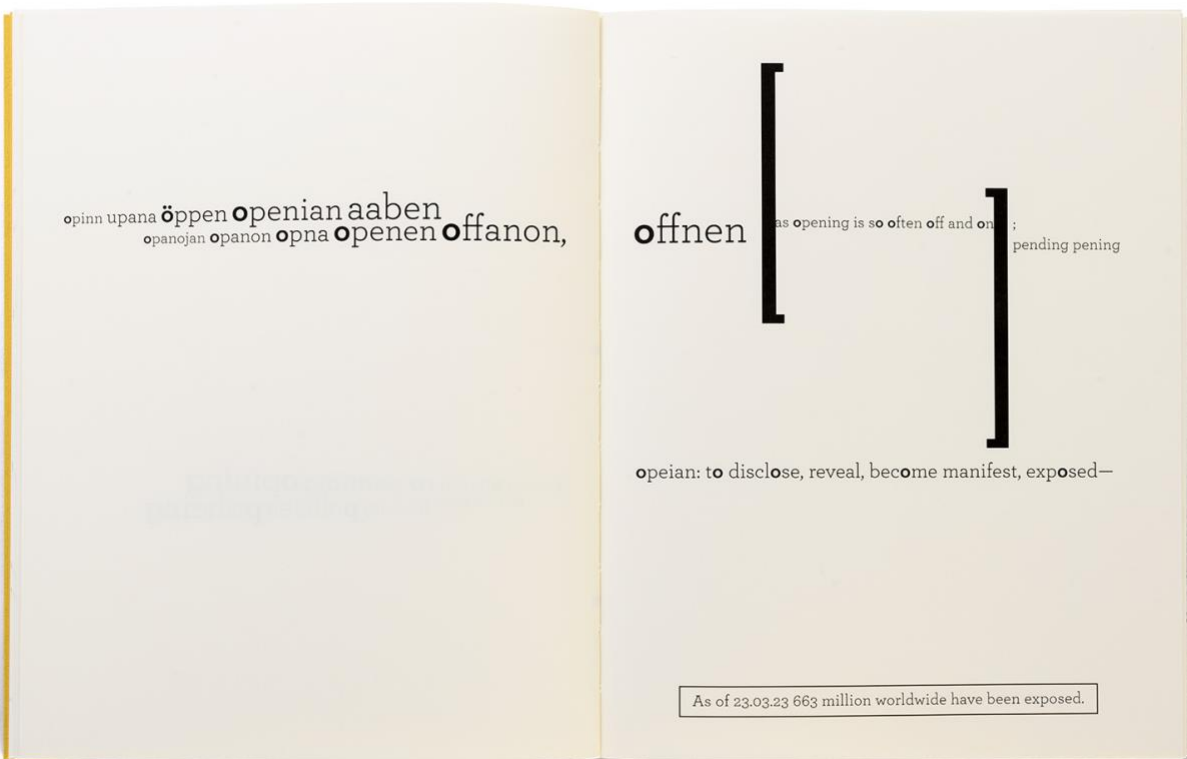
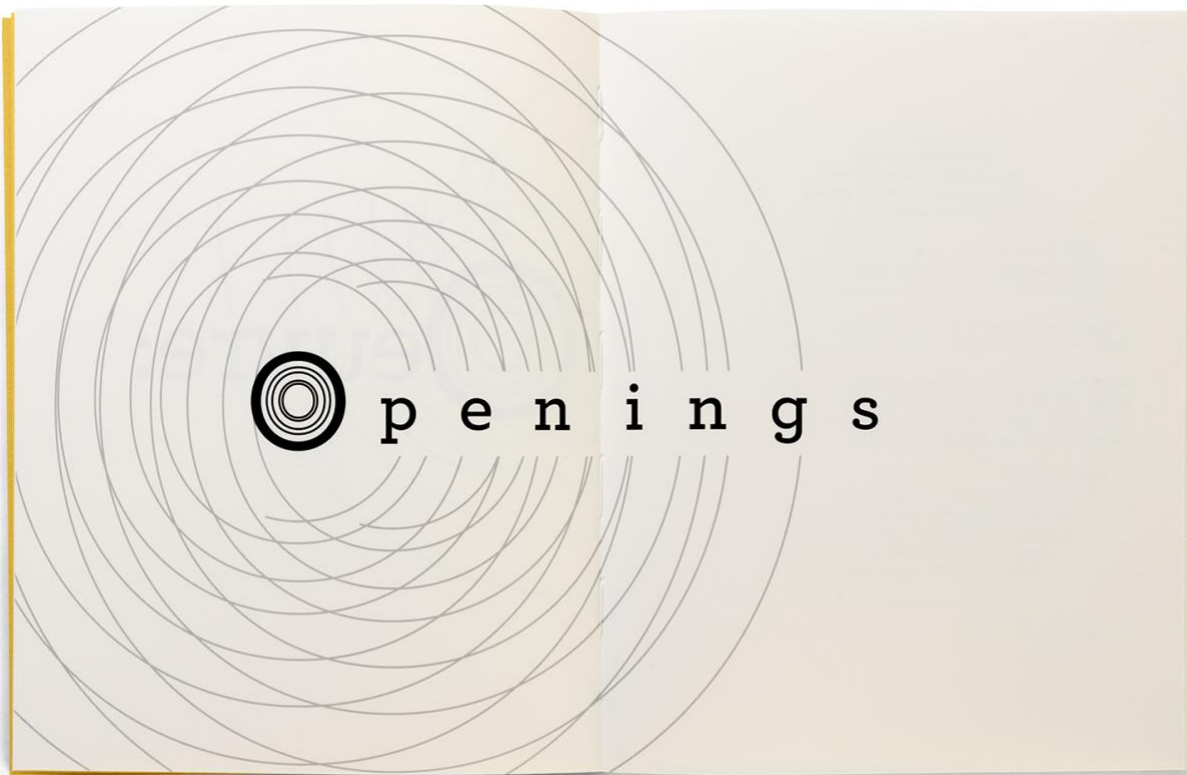
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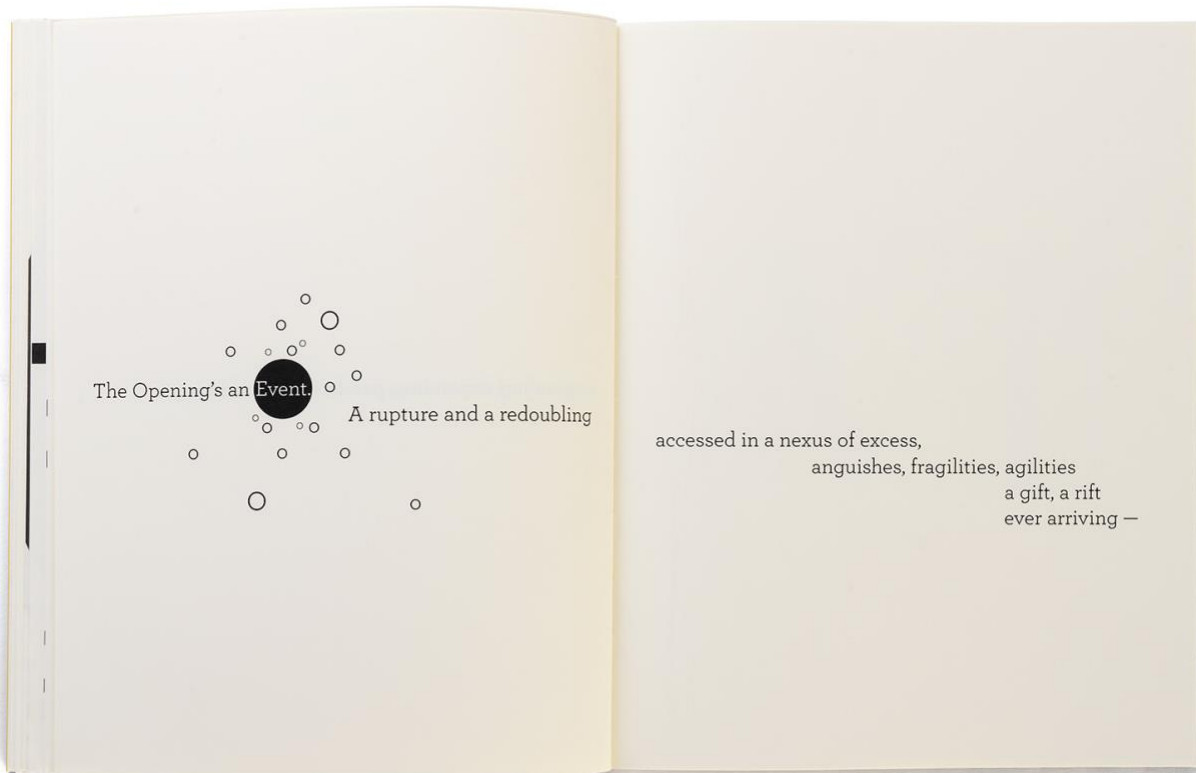
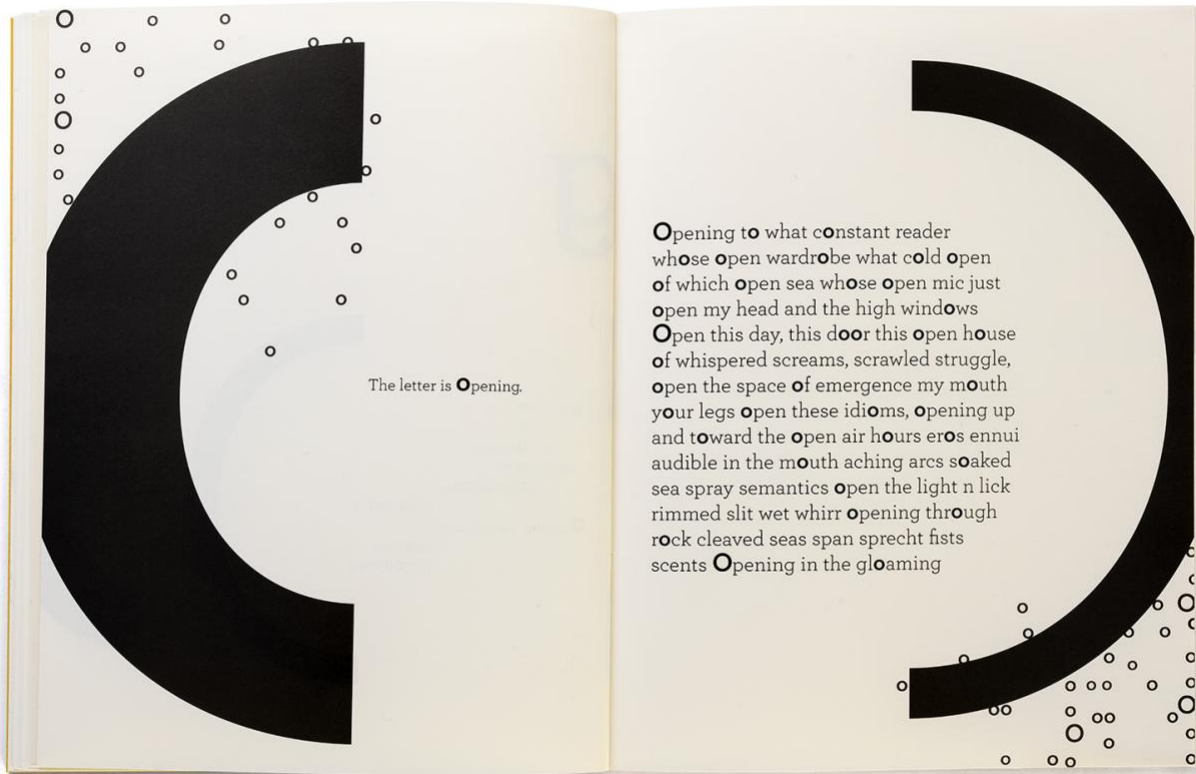
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sample spreads

[from \*Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings\*](#)







# Opening

[sic] fictiOns  
dictiOns  
dichOtomies  
defnitiOns  
cOntractiOns, extractiOns  
Opening parentheses,  
indeces,  
hypOtheses

And in Ala Moana, La Perla is opening Gucci Pucci Prada and La Furla—

Zara is opening but you can't try on clothes. ■■■■■  
The ocean is open but you can't lay in the sand. ■■■■■  
Longines is open but you can't go inside. ■■■■■  
Bathrooms are open but surfaces are plagued. ■■■■■  
Sephora's an aporia. Oh the euphoria of memoria— ■■■■■  
Costco's open but samples are closed. ■■■■■  
Skies are open but Cuba is closed. ■■■■■  
Parking is open but valets are closed. ■■■■■  
Peace Talks are open but systems are closed. ■■■■■  
Oppen is open but Ipanema is closed. ■■■■■  
Airplanes are open but runways are closed. ■■■■■  
My mouth is open but the book is closed. ■■■■■



O pen me from the inside

open and across

Pin me with paradox –  
inflammation, contamination  
feverish seizures, caesurae, screams, scars.

Pin me against the open secret  
between trauma and promise

Opening – *p'ticha potah hapur oop*

*obert ouvert aperto*  
*abierto apertura abertura*  
*entrada apen afn*

from *Touching in the Wake of The Virus*

Between abstract impact / contact / tact;

axes of attraction, transaction, infractions, reactions

... For, what lets itself be touched touches its border

touches only a point,

a limit,

a surface;

as a tangent touches a line

without crossing it



So just tttttouch me —

through veiled vélos volé réveille / [(r)evolé]

of fevered valleys, valor;

with your ordinances, affordances /  
consequences, networks / of pleasure  
policies

policing

touch me  
through these  
fractured margins  
of connections  
reflections

all sordid resorted surveyed

oy vei!

Can one / ever really touch anything:

touch / without being touched  
touch nothing

how to touch *without* touching

*without* touching too much,  
where touching is already too much—

And between objections,

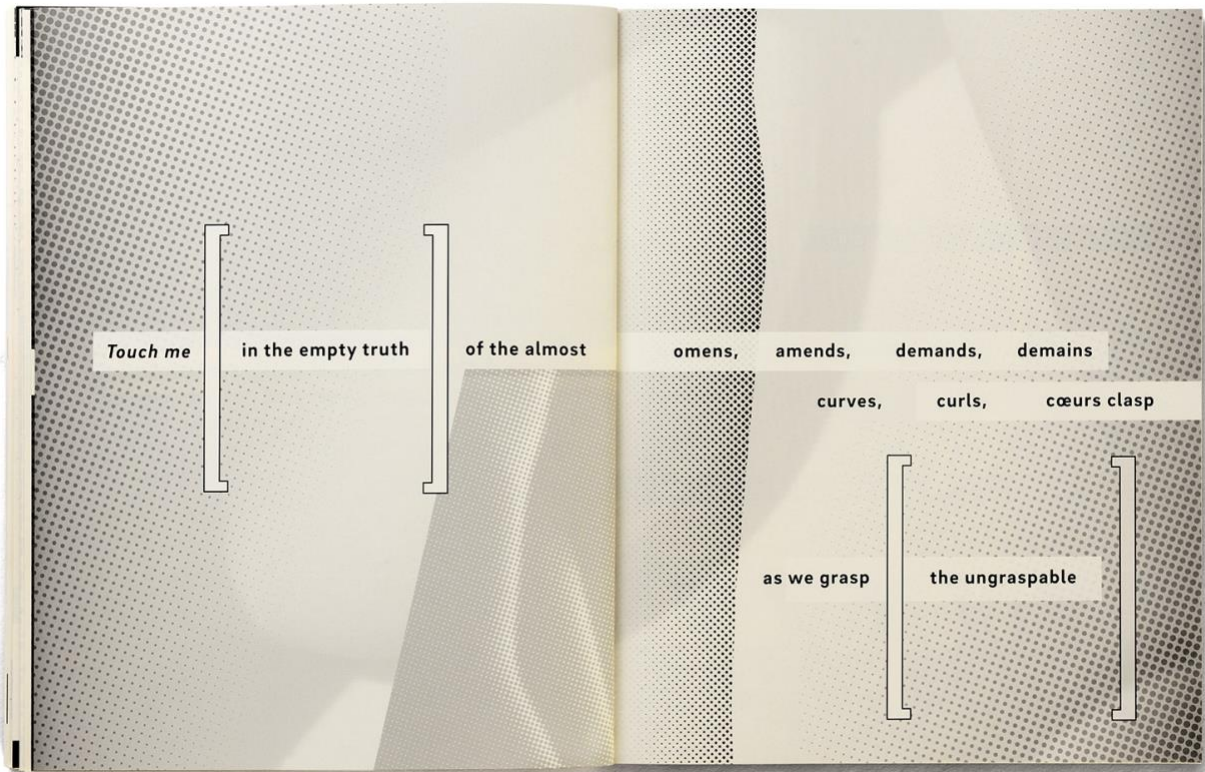
rejections, insurrections, predilections

And today i am *touching* ///// the space between us  
as dwell drips through ///// creased tease sops sol  
sweat smashed streams /// sapirous, sinuous /////  
sonorous, salient //////////////////////////////////////  
*touching* soundstreams /// screams //////////////////////////////////  
of fingered fraught ////////// fringed futures touching  
this new era, of throbbing // yields, fields, seals ////  
sated, *plaise* please play /// peau p'liaised poised—

*Touch me* in the aporia aria porous aura

of lisped slips slapped tongue-teased  
traced sweat pressed precipice  
of piscine-purred pulsing ellipse  
lisps back licked umbilicus





*Audio Augmentation/Soundtrack*

## Listen

After you've read (quietly, or not-so-quietly performed) these two poems yourself, we encourage you to read them again while listening to the recording of poet Adeena Karasick and composer/musician Frank London.

### To access and listen to the audio component of this book:

- capture the QR code on the right with a mobile device (or type in the url)
- tap the pop-up button to advance to the audio page
- before starting the audio, leaf back to the epigraph to *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings* that begins with *And in the Opening of the Opening the unnerving specter of a specter*
- tap the play button on your device
- follow along with the score, immersing yourself in both the printed and acoustic play of language, turning the pages as you read and listen
- when you finish *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings*, feel free to pause the audio or slide right into *Touching in the Wake of the Virus*



<https://soundcloud.com/earsay/karasick-openings-book-soundtrack>

**Frank London** is a Grammy-award winning composer, trumpeter and innovative force in Jazz, Klezmer, New Music, and World Music. A founding member of The Klezmates, Hasidic New Wave, and Frank London's Klezmer Brass Allstars, he has performed with John Zorn, LL Cool J, Mel Torme, Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, Itzhak Perlman, LaMonte Young, They Might Be Giants, Jane Siberry, Ben Folds 5, Mark Ribot, Maurice El Medioni and Gal Costa, and is featured on over 500 records. His projects include the folk-opera *A Night in the Old Marketplace*; *1001 Voices: A Symphony for a New America* with Judith Sloan and Warren Lehrer; *SALOME: Woman of Valor* with Adeena Karasick. He was music director for David Byrne and Robert Wilson's *The Kree Plays*. His many film scores include John Sayles' *The Brother From Another Planet* and *Men With Guns*, Yvonne Rainer's *Murder and Murder*, Maxim Pozdorovkin's *The Conspiracy*.

*Audio excerpt of Adeena Karasick performing Touching in the Wake of the Virus, with music by Frank London*

*Audio excerpt of Adeena Karasick performing Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings, with music by Frank London*

**Adeena Karasick is a high voltage performance poet.** Whenever possible, Lehrer accompanies Karasick's performance/readings of *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings* with real-time visual projections. Book Launch events feature this book and excerpts from Karasick's *Aerotomania*, which is published simultaneously by Lavender Ink. Events can include conversation/Q&A about the collaboration. Depending on the venue and availability, Frank London will join with live musical accompaniment. Karasick and Lehrer are also available for double bills, each presenting from their respective body of work. They also continue to present individually. For booking, contact [Adeena](#) and/or [Warren](#).

*Adeena performing the poems at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe*



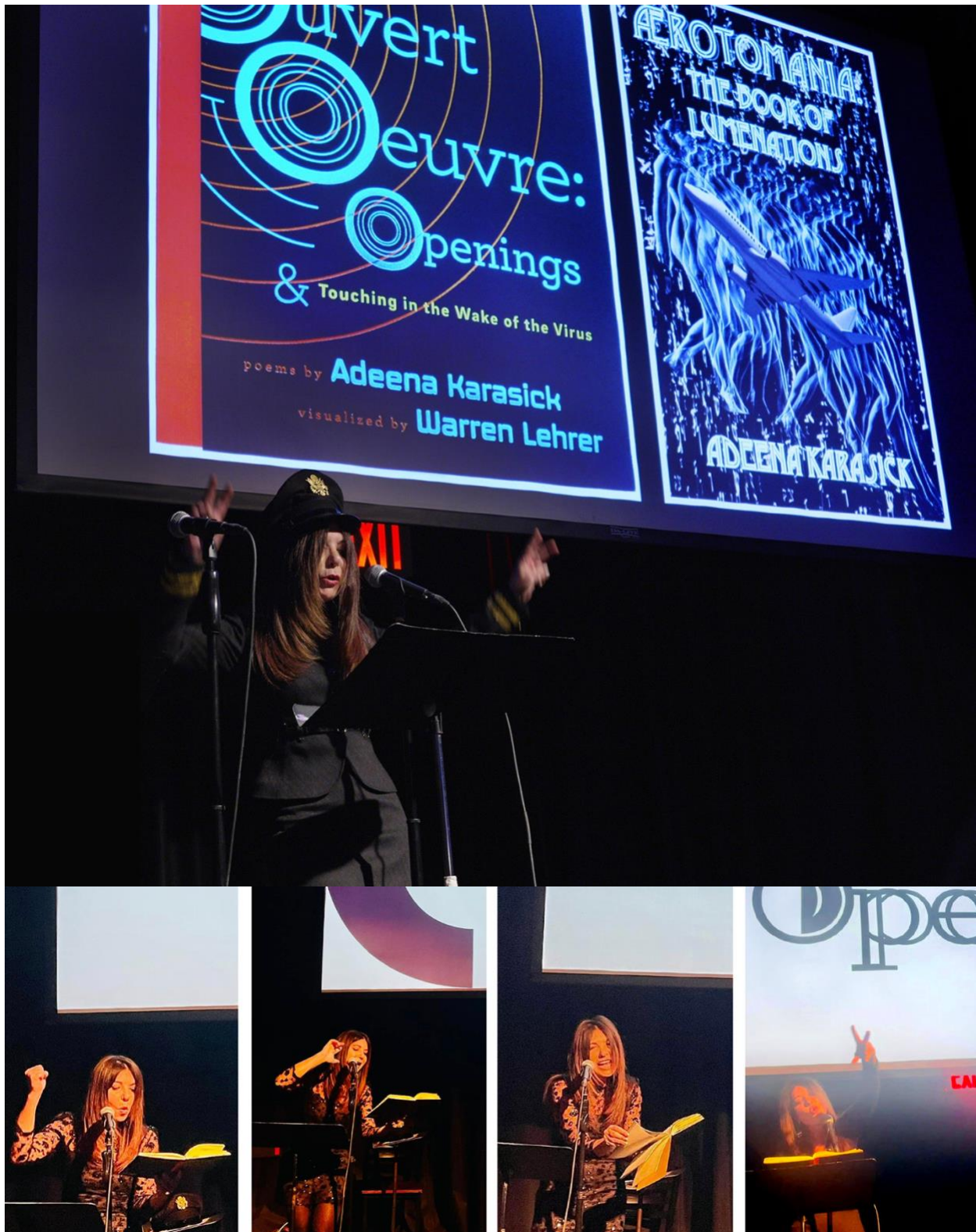
*touching* soundstreams //  
of fingered fraught /////  
this new era, of throbbing  
sated, *plaise* please play //



*Touch me in the aporia aria porous aura*







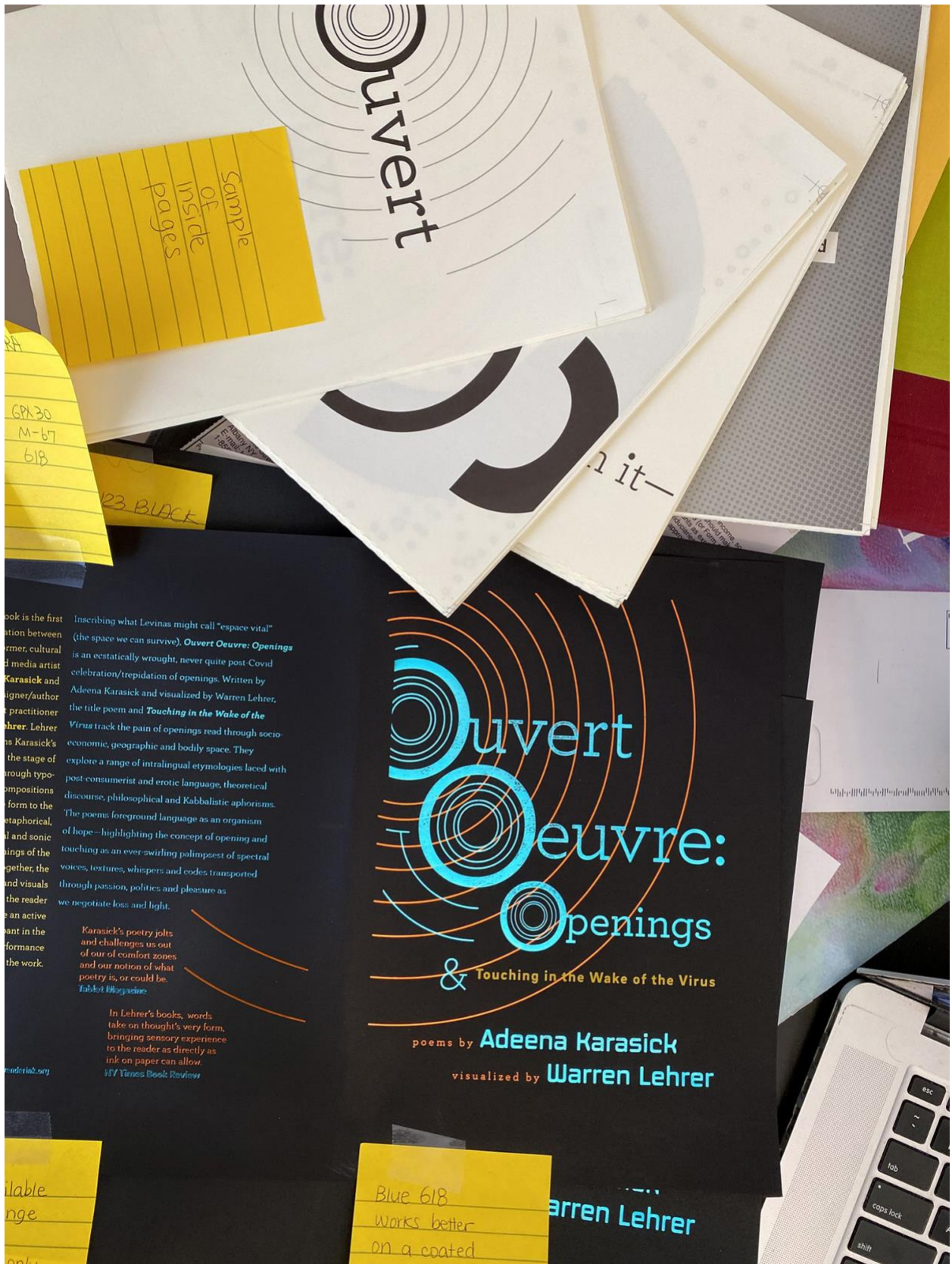
*Video taped live at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, May 20, 2023. Performed by Adeena Karasick, Projections by Warren Lehrer*

*Offstage, Warren projects images in real time at the New Orleans Poetry Festival*



*A few in-process photos and side and back cover view*





book is the first  
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rmer, cultural  
d media artist  
Karasick and  
igner/author  
practitioner  
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as Karasick's  
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Inscribing what Levinas might call "espace vital"  
(the space we can survive), *Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings*  
is an ecstatically wrought, never quite post-Covid  
celebration/trepidation of openings. Written by  
Adeena Karasick and visualized by Warren Lehrer,  
the title poem and *Touching in the Wake of the*  
*Virus* track the pain of openings read through socio-  
economic, geographic and bodily space. They  
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The poems foreground language as an organism  
of hope—highlighting the concept of opening and  
touching as an ever-swirling palimpsest of spectral  
voices, textures, whispers and codes transported  
through passion, politics and pleasure as  
we negotiate loss and light.

Karasick's poetry jolts  
and challenges us out  
of our comfort zones  
and our notion of what  
poetry is, or could be.  
*Edith Wharton*

In Lehrer's books, words  
take on thought's very form,  
bringing sensory experience  
to the reader as directly as  
ink on paper can allow.  
*NY Times Book Reviews*

# Ouvert Oeuvre: Openings & Touching in the Wake of the Virus

poems by **Adeena Karasick**  
visualized by **Warren Lehrer**

Warren Lehrer

sample  
of  
inside  
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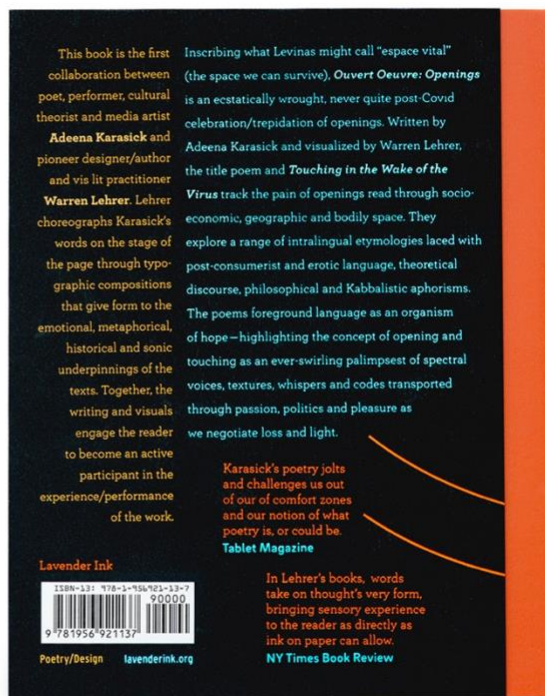
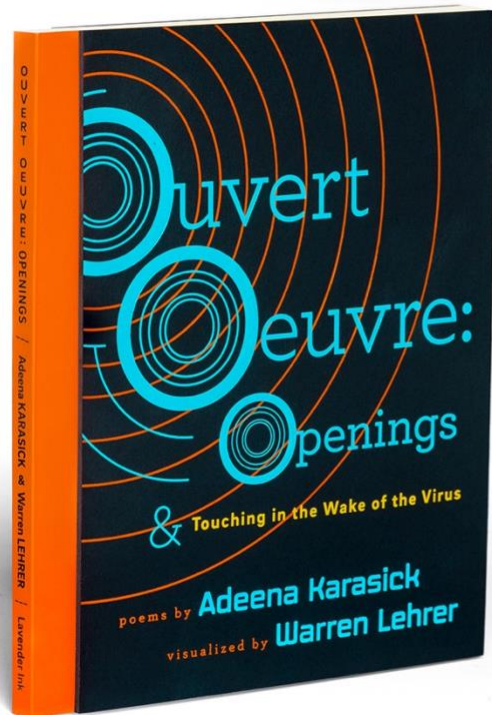
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Works better  
on a coated





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