

Writing and Language

Artists	Inspirations	Ideas
<p><i>Jenny Holzer</i> b. 1950</p> 	<p>Holzer's text-based works in the form of stark one-liners, would show up in unusual places; from t-shirts and projected images, to LED signs. These messages were designed to generate debate and encourage people to think critically about issues regarding society and the human condition. At first glance the messages could easily be mistaken for advertisements, part of the concept she was working with.</p>	<p>Text as social protest. Presentation was very important.</p>
<p><i>Ed Ruscha</i> b. 1937</p> 	<p>Ruscha worked with the idea of words becoming pictures, turning mundane objects into points of interest. He considered font and size when painting words as pictures, mimicking screens and billboards that catch the audience's attention. In this work, he examined the connotations of the <i>sound</i> of the word; playfully connecting text and language, while ironically making the image appear to be a logo.</p>	<p>Graphic word paintings to catch viewer's attention. Communicating sound, visual impact, and meaning.</p>

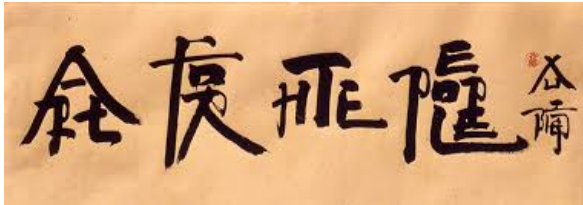
Lindisfarne Gospels
Attr. Bishop of Lindisfarne, 698-721



Medieval religious manuscripts where important passages, words, and names are given decorative emphasis. These were made as a form of devotion and meditation, with the most elaborate characters symbolizing and exalting the subject. This style incorporated Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Roman designs.

Textual decoration and symbolism to show significance and meaning.

Xu Bing
b. 1955



Xu Bing works with combining Chinese style lettering with made up symbols and letters in other languages. His work investigates how words and languages create or fill gaps between cultures. This piece is an example of his *Square Word Calligraphy Project*, in which he formed English letters into the visual style of Chinese characters; in a way, merging East/West written traditions.

Examining words, letters, and characters in the light of cultural traditions.

Graffiti Tagging
Faro, 21st century



In this controversial form of art, an individual known as “Faro” makes use of a creative respelling of the word “pharaoh” and its Egyptian connotations of mummies and pyramids. These symbols stand in for the letters “a” and “o”. This form of tagging for the writer makes a statement that “I am here”, and associates them with a sub-cultural group.

Stylistic lettering to make a statement about identity.

Rene Magritte
1989-1967



Magritte was a surrealist artist who frequently used text and images to examine the gaps between language and meaning. The description “This is not a pipe” leads the viewer to think about what it means for something to be an actual pipe, and the differences between representation and reality.

Use writing and images to encourage specific thoughts about reality.

“The Treachery of Images”

Joseph Kosuth
b. 1945



Kosuth explored the relationships between words, their meanings, and the objects they describe. In this piece, he plays with the idea of what art is and what makes up the essence of something: the physical object, the image, or the description.

Exploration of ideas, meanings, words, and objects.

“One and Three Chairs”

Barbara Kruger
b. 1945



Kruger uses advertisement images and cut out text to form confrontational messages. Through works such as this, she aims to get the viewer to reconsider political and societal views. The use of black and white images, and red and white text are crucial to the effectiveness of her pieces.

Collaged text/images to make social and political statements.

Lalla Essaydi
b. 1956



Essaydi works with writing and the idea of women's roles in the Muslim culture. She incorporates two different forms of art in her work, the women's art of Henna, and the man's art of calligraphy. She plays with the traditional uses of these art forms by combining them to form a commentary on the traditions.

Melding the art form of calligraphy with others to take on different meanings.

Other Examples:

Filippo Tommaso- creative typography to convey meaning.

Russian Constructivism- political propaganda in typography.

Lawrence Weiner- words written directly on walls, the word becomes the picture

Dadaism, Tristan Tzara- text cut-ups to form poems of chance and juxtaposition

Cy Twombly- exploring the process of writing, abstract work

Raymond Pettibon- incorporates text and images in comic strip like works

Main Ideas:

Writing connects to art through the idea of what constitutes meaning. Images and text have the shared function of representing things: be that ideas, places, objects, etc. They both connote abstract thinking, and denote actual things. There is also the connection to language, because what is done in language can easily be done in writing.