Text in Art



Different examples of Illustrated Manuscripts-Illustrated manuscript from a Biblical Hymn Page from the Lindesfarne Gospels Tughra of Sultan Sulaiman- 16<sup>th</sup> Cent illustration



Barbara Kruger- You are not yourself- 1982

Kruger's <u>You Are Not Yourself</u> (1982) uses this humorous technique to underscore a feminist point of view. The words 'you are not yourself' are disjointedly laid over a photograph of a distressed woman looking into a shattered mirror. This montage is immediately ironic because you are looking into a mirror, the object our culture relies on to reflect reality, but it is cracked and without its reassurance you are not yourself. Somehow your own existence is in question. This begs the question why are you not yourself?

Continuing with the theme of feminist art, Kruger is perhaps indicating that you are not yourself because our culture, ruled by the mirror and the media, mandates that you be one thing that you are not or possibly may never be. Kruger is commenting on the unreality of the ideal female image portrayed by the media and she will revisit the stereotypical female role in later pieces.

Kruger- *I Shop therefore I am-* 1987

is another arresting design with academic undertones. The title of the piece, of course in white Futura letting, is written in a red rectangle and held between the thumb and middle finger as though it were a credit card or some sort or identification. A clear reference to Descartes "I think therefore I am," Kruger jokingly implies that in our society consumerism is valued and elevated to a level so high it supersedes consciousness. But on some levels could this be more than a joke? After all, a joke is usually half of the truth. Just think of the numbing effects advertising can have

Rene Descartes- 17thC Philosopher- He is best known for the philosophical statement "Cogito ergo sum" (French: Je pense, donc je suis; English: I think, therefore I am; or I am thinking, therefore I exist), found in part IV of Discourse on the Method (1637 - written in French but with inclusion of "Cogito ergo sum") and in part I of Principles of Philosophy (1644 - written in Latin).



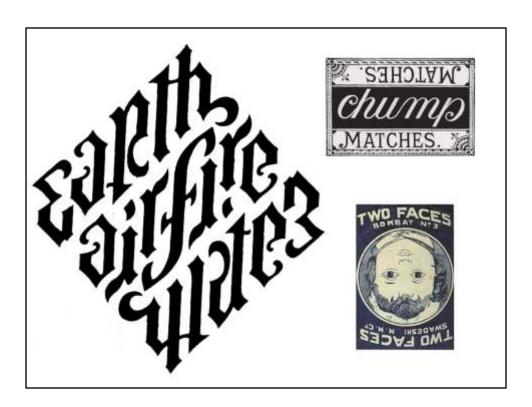
Shirin Neshat-Rebellious Silence-1994 and Untitled 1996
Shirin Neshat doesn't quite know where to call home. The 43-year-old artist was born and raised in Iran but moved to the U.S. after high school to study art. When the Islamic Revolution overtook her homeland in 1979, Neshat was exiled and couldn't return until 11 years later--and the country she went home to bore little resemblance to the one she left.

Neshat dealt with her sense of displacement by trying to untangle the ideology of Islam through art. The result was Women of Allah (1993-97), a photographic series of militant Muslim women that subverts the stereotype and examines the Islamic idea of martyrdom. In 1996, Neshat began working with film, eager to create more poetic, open-ended works. She produced a trilogy of split-screen video installations--Turbulent (1998), Rapture (1999) and Fervor (2000)--all sumptuously filmed meditations on the male/female dynamic in Islamic societies.



## John Langdon- *Mantra*- 1986

Tibetan Buddhists believe that saying the mantra (prayer), *Om Mani Padme Hum*, out loud or silently to oneself, invokes the powerful benevolent attention and blessings of Chenrezig, the embodiment of compassion. Viewing the written form of the mantra is said to have the same effect -- it is often carved into stones, like the one pictured above, and placed where people can see them.



This is an ambigram, made popular by a book by Da Vinci Code writer Dan Brown called Angels and Demons.

An **ambigram** is a typographical design or artform that may be read as one or more words not only in its form as presented, but also from another viewpoint, direction, or orientation. The words readable in the other viewpoint, direction or orientation may be the same or different from the original words

The earliest known non-natural ambigram dates to 1893 by artist Peter Newell. Although better known for his children's books and illustrations for Mark Twain and Lewis Carroll, he published two books of invertible illustrations, in which the picture turns into a different image entirely when turned upside down. The last page in his book, *Topsys & Turvys* contains the phrase THE END, which, when inverted, reads PUZZLE. In



## Jaume Plensa- Nomade- 2007

Officially inaugurated on March 25, 2007, the newly renovated Bastion Saint-Jaume in Antibes is quite eye-catching with its newest sculptural addition, by a contemporary Spanish sculptor named Jaume Plensa. The *Nomade* is from a private collection, and it is made from a base of painted stainless steel letters. It uses light, sound, and language to express its message. This eight-meter high sculpture, which one can walk into, represents a person, crouching with his arms around his knees, facing the sea. Plensa suggests that language, spoken or written, goes beyond providing a simple mission of communication, but can also be assimilated into a sort of envelope, which covers the matter and energy that forms our being. He says, "Telles des briques, les lettres ont une potentialité de construction, elles nous permettent de construire une pensée". (Such bricks, letters have the potential to construct, they enable us to construct a thought.)



Robert Indiana- Red Love statue- c1960

In 1954, Indiana and joined the pop art movement, using distinctive imagery drawing on commercial art approaches blended with existentialism, that gradually moved toward what Indiana calls "sculptural poems".

Indiana's iconic work *LOVE* was first created for a Christmas card for the Museum of Modern Art in 1964 and later was included on an eight-cent United States Postal Service postage stamp in 1973, the first of their regular series of "love stamps." Sculptural versions of the image have been installed at numerous American and international locations.

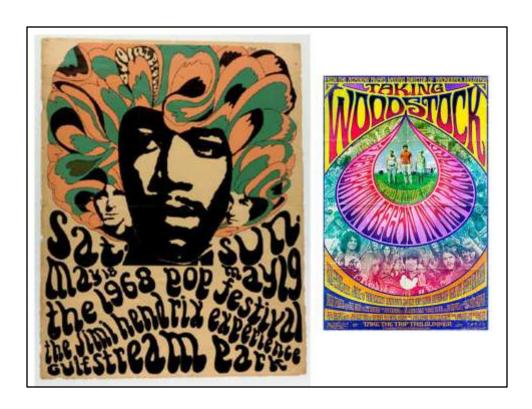
In 1977 he created a Hebrew version with the four letter word Ahava (" ואהבה love" in Hebrew) using Cor-ten steel, for the Israel Museum Art Garden in Jerusalem, Israel.



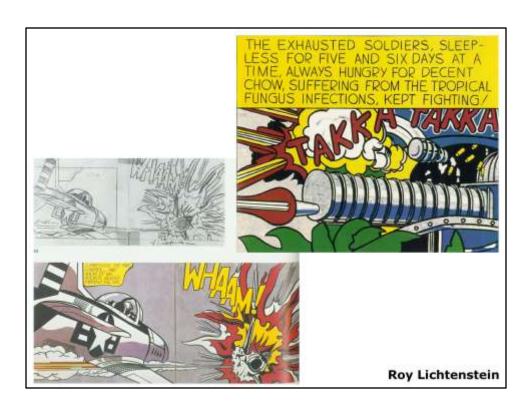
In 2008, Indiana created an image similar to his iconic *LOVE* (letters stacked two to a line, the letter "o" tilted on its side), but this time showcasing the word "HOPE," and donated all proceeds from the sale of reproductions of his image to Democrat Barack Obama's presidential campaign, Raising in excess of \$1,000,000. A stainless steel sculpture of *HOPE* was unveiled outside Denver's Pepsi Centre during the 2008 Democratic National Convention. The Obama campaign sold T-shirts, pins, bumper stickers, posters, pins and other items adorned with *HOPE*.



Snow word sculpture produced at the Harbin Art Festival in China 2009



These are both posters from the 60's and 70's using psychedelic art colours and squeezed in text to create dynamic and eye catching posters which signify this music era.



Lichtenstein- Whaam!- 1963

Takka Takka- 1962

Lichtenstein was a prominent American pop artist. His work was heavily influenced by both popular advertising and the comic book style. He himself described pop art as, "not 'American' painting but actually industrial painting".

His most famous image is arguably *Whaam!* (1963, <u>Tate Modern</u>, <u>London<sup>[12]</sup></u>), one of the earliest known examples of pop art, adapted a comic-book panel from a 1962 issue of <u>DC Comics'</u> <u>All-American Men of War<sup>[13]</sup></u>. The painting depicts a fighter aircraft firing a rocket into an enemy plane, with a red-and-yellow explosion. The cartoon style is heightened by the use of the onomatopoeic lettering "Whaam!" and the boxed caption "I pressed the fire control... and ahead of me rockets blazed through the sky..." This diptych is large in scale, measuring 1.7 x 4.0 m