

JENNY

HOLZER

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This resource is in presentation style, for use with Power Point or as a printed handout. It can be used as part of pre-visit preparation, to accompany a visit, or can stand alone. It consists of 2 parts:

Part One

Information, images and ideas for students

- About the artist
- About the work
- Things to think about
- In my opinion
- Here's one I made earlier...
- Further research

Part Two

Notes for teachers

- Cross curricular opportunities
- Useful links and additional resources

A futuristic, curved structure with red and blue LED lights forming the words "PART ONE". The structure is composed of several horizontal bands, with the top band glowing red and the bottom band glowing blue. The background is a dark, curved surface with a gradient of red and blue light, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and modern.

PART ONE

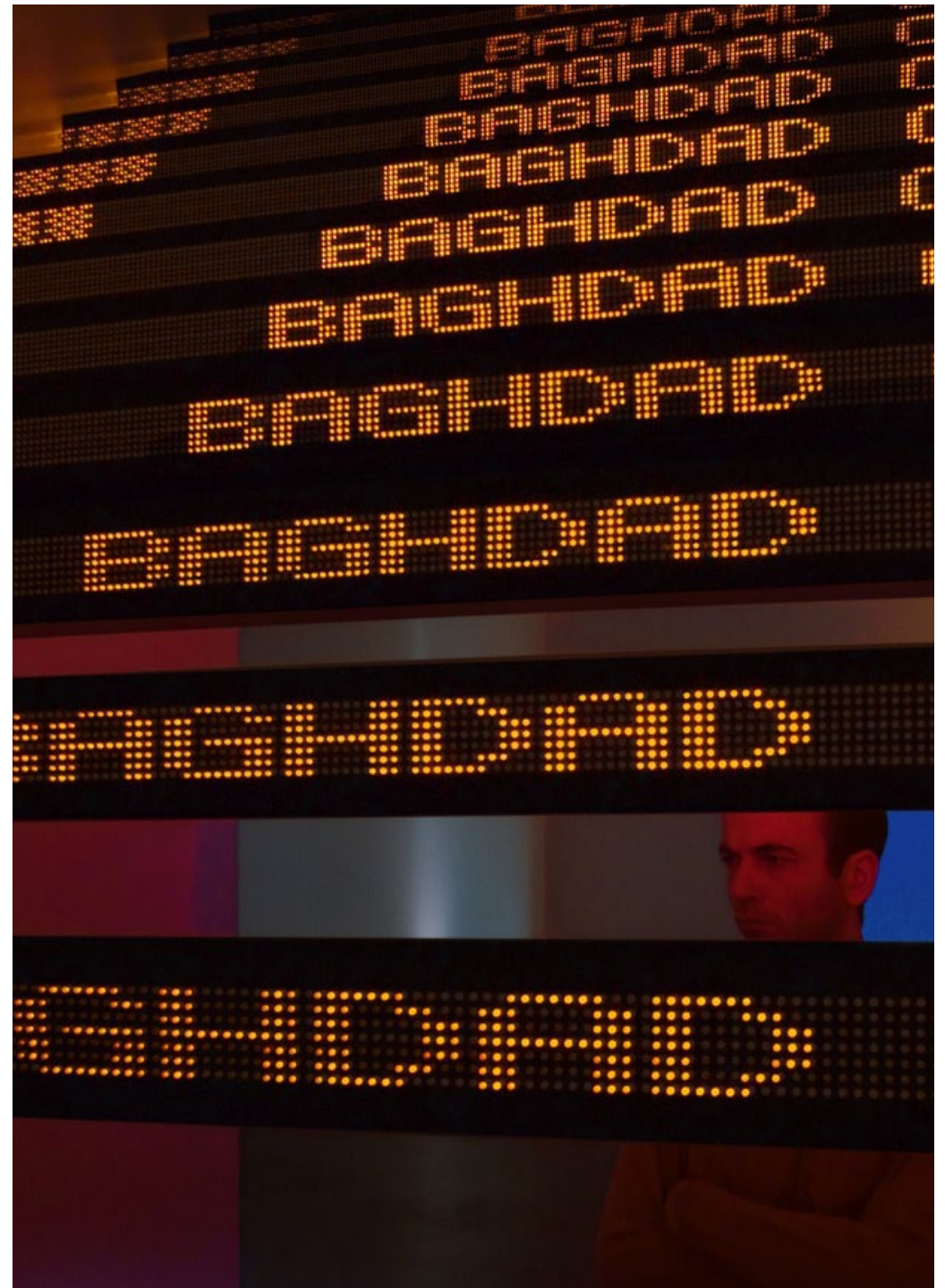
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jenny Holzer was born in Gallipolis, Ohio, USA, in 1950. She studied Fine Art at Ohio University and Rhode Island School of Design. Holzer's work has been shown in art galleries and public spaces around the world including the Guggenheim museums in New York and Bilbao, and the Reichstag building in Germany. In 2000, she participated in B4B, BALTIC's pre-opening programme, projecting text on to the sides of buildings and structures in Tyneside, including the Castle Keep, BALTIC and a boat on the river Tyne. Holzer lives and works in New York.



ABOUT THE WORK

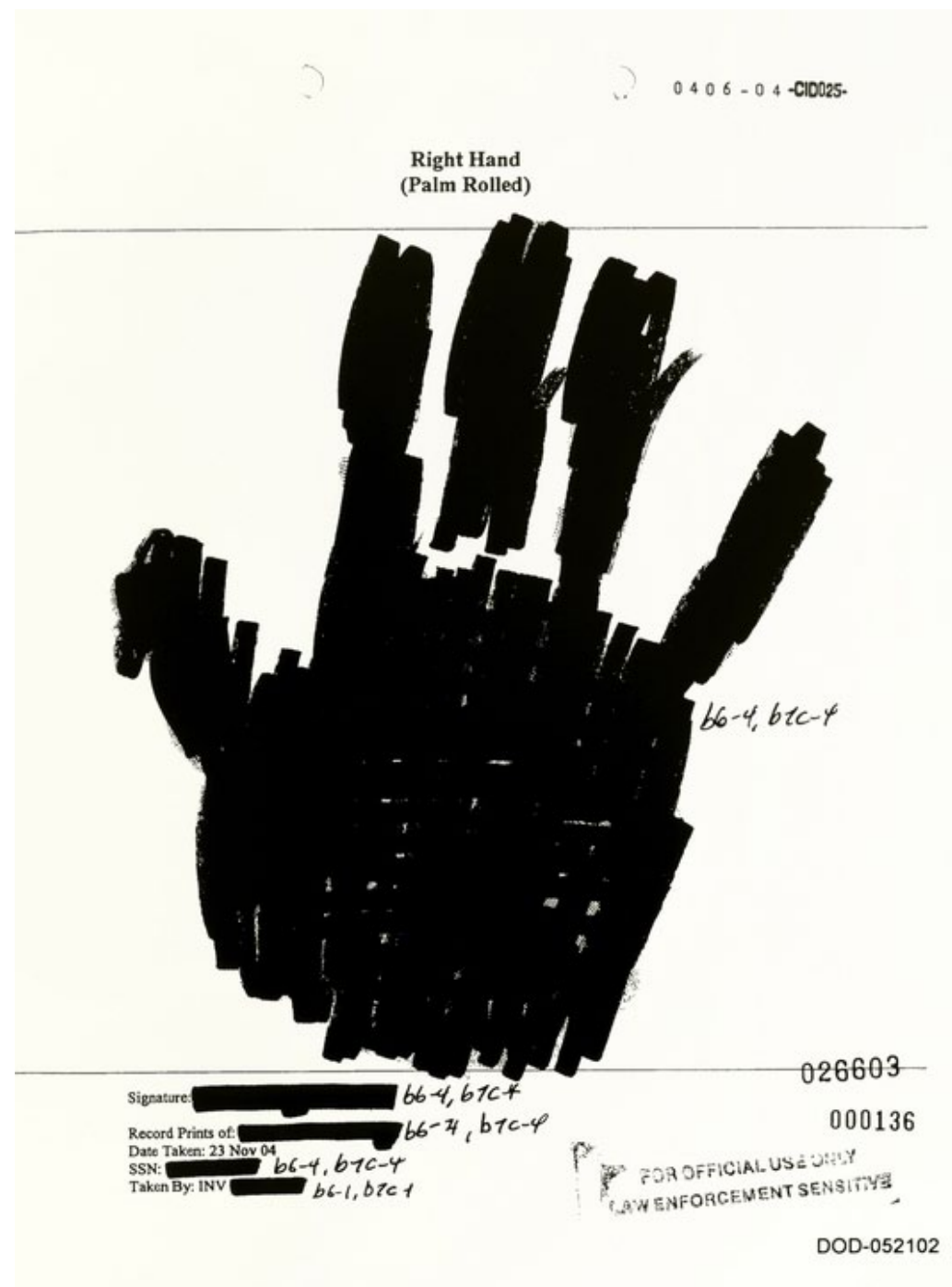
Jenny Holzer has been using text in her art since the late 1970s. One of her best-known works, *Truisms* (1977-79), took the form of posters pasted up around the streets of New York. The posters presented lists of written statements, expressing a range of contradictory opinions. People passing in the street were left to wonder who had written the anonymous statements, and whether they agreed with each one. In 1982 Holzer began presenting her *Truisms* on rectangular electronic signs or LED displays, normally used in advertising or for giving practical information in public spaces. She has used this medium ever since, within galleries and public spaces, enabling her to experiment with the colour, movement and direction of the text. Holzer is also known for working with large-scale projected text in public spaces. As well as using the exterior walls of many buildings throughout the world, she has projected on to natural surfaces such as sand, water and the side of a mountain. Holzer's work confronts people with contradictory views on fundamental human themes, such as hope, despair, need and longing, often forcing the viewer to rethink their response.



ABOUT THE WORK

This is an exhibition of art works created by Holzer from the mid 1990s to the present day, shown across two floors at BALTIC. As well as continuing to work with text and electronic displays, Holzer has expanded the range of media she uses, including new work in sculpture, painting and projection in interior spaces.

In 2001 Holzer stopped using her own writing in her work and began using text from a range of different sources including official documents and poetry. Holzer's ongoing interest in the subject of war is reflected in her use of declassified US government documents relating to conflict in the Middle East and the war in Iraq. These documents, including pages from a Powerpoint presentation outlining the U.S strategy for the war in Iraq and handprints of U.S soldiers accused of crimes in Iraq, provide the source material for Holzer's *Redaction Paintings*. The documents were originally confidential because they were considered to contain sensitive information. They have since been 'de-classified' and made available to the public, but only after certain parts of the documents were blacked out in order to conceal any 'sensitive' information, a process known as redaction. Many of the recent LED works in the exhibition such as *Thorax* (2008), *Purple* (2008) and *Red Yellow Looming* (2004), also display texts taken from declassified U.S government documents. The viewer is invited to question their trust of authority and reflect on the censorship of information.



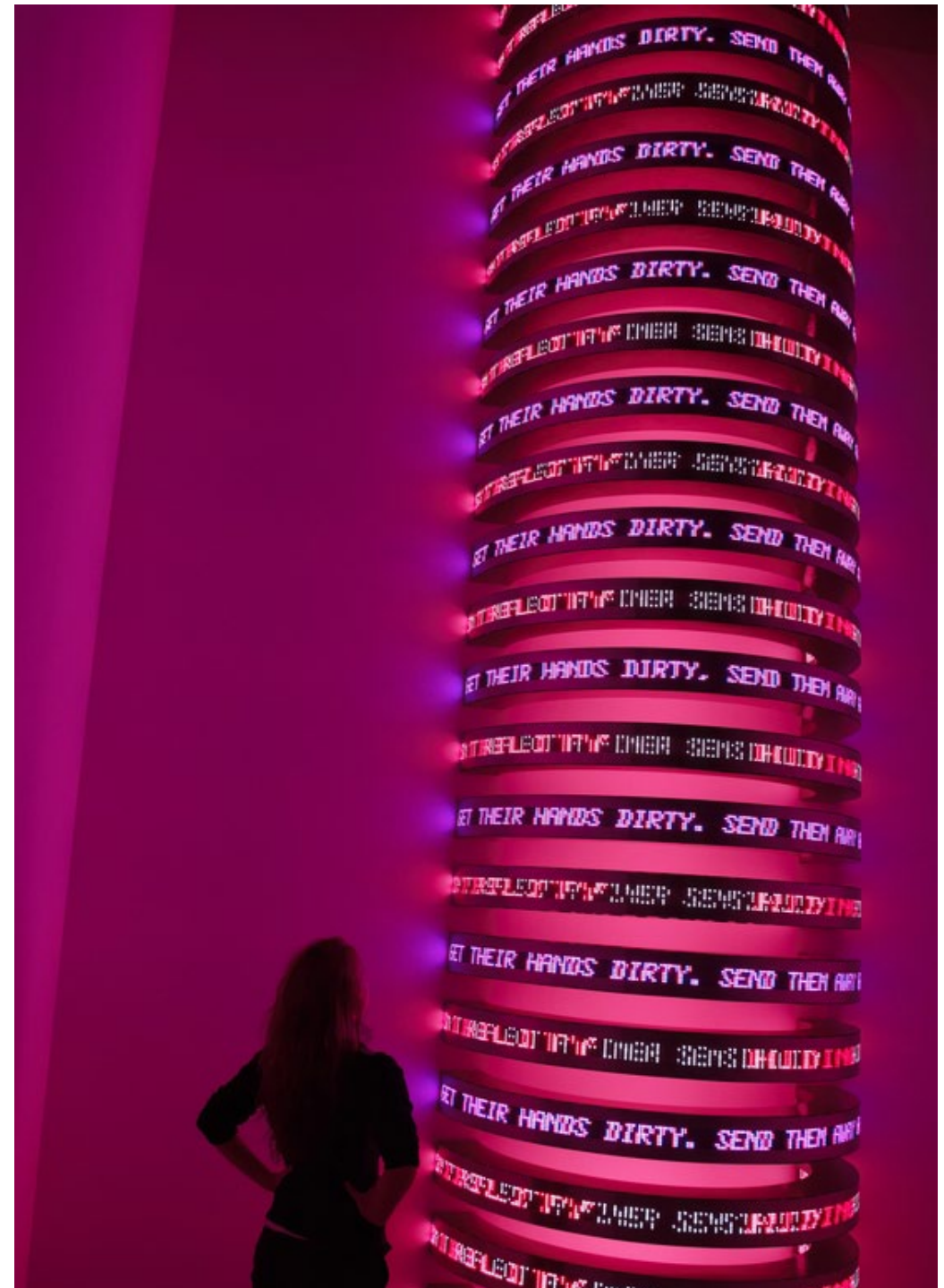
THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Jenny Holzer uses electronic, LED signs to create some of her art works.

- Where might you normally see this type of sign?
- Have you seen one anywhere before?
- What type of text is often displayed on signs like these?

Look at several different works in the exhibition which use electronic, LED signs. Spend some time looking at the works and try to read the text which is being displayed.

- Who do you think has written the text?
- Where has it come from?
- Does it matter whether you know the original source of the text?
- How does the movement of the text affect your experience when you are looking at the work?



IN MY OPINION

When talking about the difference between displaying text in an art gallery or in a public space, Jenny Holzer says,

“...The subject matter tends to be the same, but what I’ll do if I know it’s going to be in a gallery or museum where people are willing to invest more time, is write longer, more complicated texts. On the street the text has to become a one-liner if I hope to catch someone’s attention.”

- Why do you think people might spend longer looking at text in an art gallery than they would if they were outside on the street?
- Do you think there are any other differences between showing text in a public space or in an art gallery?

When talking about the colour scheme used to paint official documents in her Redaction Paintings, Holzer says that “**black on white seems factual**”.

- Do you agree?
- Why do you think black on white might seem factual?
- What effect would it have if the documents were painted using other colours?
- Would it change the meaning of the text or feeling created by the work?

In small groups, discuss the differences between these words:


- opinion
- fact
- statement
- fiction

Choose one of the artworks in the exhibition and write a sentence about it which includes one of the words.

MAJOR CASE PRINTS

NAME: (Last, First, MI)	[REDACTED]	CASE: 0116-04-CID477
SSN:	[REDACTED]	TAKEN BY: SA [REDACTED]
SIGNATURE:	[REDACTED] b(7)(c)-2	DATE: 22 Nov 03

PALM, FINGERS & FINGERTIPS (LEFT HAND)



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(EXHIBIT _____)
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HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER

The phrase, 'a landscape of text', has been used to describe some of Jenny Holzer's art works. Think about the meaning of the phrase.

- What might 'a landscape of text' look like?
- What text could it include?

Create an art work which reflects your own personal response to the phrase 'a landscape of text'. Consider the different ways in which you could respond to the phrase, and incorporate your own thoughts and ideas.

Here are some suggestions of materials and techniques you could use:

- Write on acetate, then hold it up in front of a view and photograph it.
- Create a sculpture or installation by placing letters in an outdoor landscape. Photograph the work to record it or invite people to come and see it.
- Collect text from newspapers, magazines, scrap office paper, bus tickets or carrier bags and use it in your work.
- Cut your own letters out of different materials.
- Create 3D letters using a range of materials. Stand them up in different places and photograph them.
- Create an image by building up text in layers. Consider whether you want the audience to be able to read it.



FURTHER RESEARCH

Barbara Kruger
Bruce Nauman
Dan Flavin
Daniel Buren
Ed Ruscha
Hans Haacke
Joseph Kosuth
Kay Rosen
Lawrence Weiner
Laurie Anderson
Louise Bourgeois
Louise Lawler
Marcel Duchamp
Mark Titchner
Nancy Spero

LITERACY KEY WORDS

authority

opinion

war

censorship

original

projection

statement

text

contradiction

factual

government

painting

public space

source

truism

declassified

document

sculpture



PART TWO

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Contemporary art is incredibly diverse and wide ranging and can be used to support teaching and learning as part of an entire learning experience. It can be used to generate creative thinking in all subject areas and to support learning across curricular dimensions, as well as contribute to personal development and personalised learning.

CROSS CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

- Art and Design
- English
- History
- ICT
- Citizenship

USEFUL LINKS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BALTIC

www.balticmill.com

QUAY

www.balticmill.com/quay

Library and Archive

<http://archive.balticmill.com>

'In my opinion' toolkit to help pupils approach artwork,
formulate questions and contribute opinions

<http://www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php>

Blank presentation template: pupils can use this to
present their own research and ideas

<http://www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php>

Baltic Secondary Resources Bank: pupils can use this
to search for and download images and other information

<http://www.balticmill.com/learning/Downloads.php>

IMAGE CREDITS

Slide 3

MONUMENT, 2008 (detail)

22 electronic signs with red, white, and blue diodes
Installation: *LIKE TRUTH*, Diehl + Gallery One,
Moscow, 2008. Text: *Truisms*, 1977–79; *Inflammatory
Essays*, 1979–82. © 2010 Jenny Holzer, member
Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.
Photo: Vassilij Gureev

Slide 4

Jenny Holzer
Photograph by Vera Isler
© The photographer

Slide 5

Red Yellow Looming, 2004 (detail)

13 electronic signs with red and amber diodes
Installation: Jenny Holzer: *PROTECT PROTECT*,
Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Chicago, 2009
Text: U.S. government documents © 2010 Jenny
Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.
Photo: Attilio Maranzano

Slide 6

Right Hand (Palm Rolled), 2007

Oil on linen. 80 x 62 in.; 203.2 x 157.5 cm.
Text: U.S. government document. © 2010 Jenny
Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

Slide 7

MONUMENT, 2008

22 electronic signs with red, white, and blue diodes
194.3 x 57.8 x 28.9 in.; 493.5 x 146.8 x 73.4 cm.
Installation: *LIKE TRUTH*, Diehl + Gallery One,
Moscow, 2008. Text: *Truisms*, 1977–79; *Inflammatory
Essays*, 1979–82. © 2010 Jenny Holzer, member
Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.
Photo: Vassilij Gureev

Slide 8

PALM, FINGERS & FINGERTIPS 000406, 2007

Oil on linen. 58 x 44 in.; 147.3 x 111.8 cm.
Text: U.S. government document. © 2010
Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights
Society (ARS), NY.

Slide 9

For New York City, 2004

Light projection
Bethesda Fountain, Central Park, New York
Text (pictured): “Love Lies Sleeping” from *The
Complete Poems: 1927–1979* by Elizabeth Bishop,
copyright © 1979, 1983 by Alice Helen Methfessel.
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and Giroux, LLC. Presented by Creative Time. © 2010
Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS),
NY. Photo: Attilio Maranzano

Slide 10

For Chicago, 2007

11 electronic signs with amber diodes
2.36 x 334.9 x 576 in.; 6 x 850.6 x 1,463 cm.
Installation: Jenny Holzer: *PROTECT PROTECT*,
Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Chicago, 2008
Text (pictured): Arno, 1996. © 2010 Jenny Holzer,
member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.
Photo: Attilio Maranzano