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~~TEXT AS ART~~
TEXT AS ART

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THE**



**LAST
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**FOR
FREE
WORLD**

The dematerialization of art is an article written by Lucy R Lippard and John Chandler in the 1960s, a time in history which gave rise to the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the Women's Liberation Movement and the Counterculture. The 1960s was an environment of social unrest focused on freedom in every sense and breaking away from any kind of cultural confinement. The article is a culmination of social, cultural, and political events that led the society to contest the definition of art and how it is perceived and the article acknowledges this dematerialization of art as an object to an extent where the object becomes wholly obsolete. The emergence of conceptual art is an occasion characterized by lack of order and chaos that created a new utopia by visualizing a novel world where art is meant to reflect, inspire and explore what lies beyond the surface. The dematerialization of art refers to the subversion of the traditional definition of art where the object becomes secondary, and the emphasis is on the non-visual/idea/process that in turn opens infinite possibilities instead of narrowing them down. Lippard and Chandler map the emergence of conceptual art from two directions: art as idea and art as action.

The authors perspective elaborates on the topic of conceptual art and draws comparison of its understanding with the conventional way in which art existed and was perceived by an audience,

where the process/idea becomes the focus of interest over the end object. Open-ended, ambiguous and idea driven in its approach, this physical evolution of art has resulted in what Lippard and Chandler describe as a *"disintegration of art"*, and *"abstraction and liberation of the idea."* The idea is paramount, and the material form is secondary, bridging the gap between verbal and visual, the writer and the artist, establishing the idea of art as an experience with an underlying intellectual schema, inducing it with cerebral qualities to achieve more with less. The article challenges how much less 'nothing' can be.

The intrinsic nature of conceptual art

In "The dematerialization of art", Lippard and Chandler state: A highly conceptual art, like an extremely rejective art or an apparently random art, upsets detractors because there is "not enough to look at," or rather not enough of what they are accustomed to looking for.

Conceptual art is conceptual in its heavy reliance on the idea/process as paramount with the belief that articulation of an idea suffices as a work of art. The underlying intellectual schema is of utmost value, while visual aesthetic considerations are subordinate, and often fueled by indifference. The idea supersedes the form in its importance and aims to draw a possibility of a different relation between the audience and the

interpretation. Conceptual art demands more participation and time from the viewer despite its lack of detail on the surface in order to fully experience and adsorb its true essence. Lippard and Chandler support this point by describing how conceptual art invites the audience to spend more time experiencing and interacting with something that appears detail-less and has the quality of stretching time psychologically. Consider that time spent looking at something that is visually empty results in feeling that time is passing slowly in comparison to the quickened elapse of time spent engaged in a visually-charged piece of work in terms of its form.

The underlying meaning of dematerialization

Lippard elaborates on conceptual art, drawing focus on how dematerialization attempts to simplify the form of art whose core shifts from being perceived not only just in its form (syntax) rather the perception of what is truly, inherently meaningful (message). Conceptual art serves as a medium for a continuum of conversation with no intentions of becoming the message itself. According to Lippard, conceptual art is by no means the final phase of art but an opening up of multiplicity of ideas reminding us what the value of art truly is. "it will be content with less and achieve more" (Lippard 50). Art can be everything in its nothingness but that does not

determine how less of something that takes the form of art qualifies to be nothingness rather the meaning of conceptual art is ever evolving, oscillating between the polar ends of all-encompassing understanding.

Conclusion

In "The dematerialization of art", Lippard and Chandler conclude: We still do not know how much less "nothing" can be. Has an ultimate zero point been arrived at with black paintings, white paintings, light beams, transparent film, silent concerts, invisible sculpture, or any of the other projects mentioned above? It hardly seems likely. The article successfully emphasizes that conceptual art is boundless, devoted to making ideas the central focus of its existence and since ideas come with no boundaries, so does the art that represents them, it is a vehicle for the continuing critique on different aspects of the world. Conceptual art paves the way for an emerging information economy where the true substance lies in the ever evolving meaning, an expression through semantic content, intellectualizing the visual, forming an interactive process and an eternal anticipation of social evolution.

L O R

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prox mordit, habes! Sertus se, Catisque contra
qui con rei fuit fac octorum es esedi se cient
erorum orsum vicae nonerta putum silnequem

scerurbisquo et rem tum, con stesse des! Pon-
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erri stod moves moris, niquam Romnit, dessulem
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libus, intelium maioratodiem quem iam abituam
Furo ex mordientem suam nonos ordii se re te
incles prae mius, nostem percere, stusque pera
tatam ducera? tcaed Catuamloo rem mentiam
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DO NOT JUSTIFY TEXT stesse des! Ponsil-
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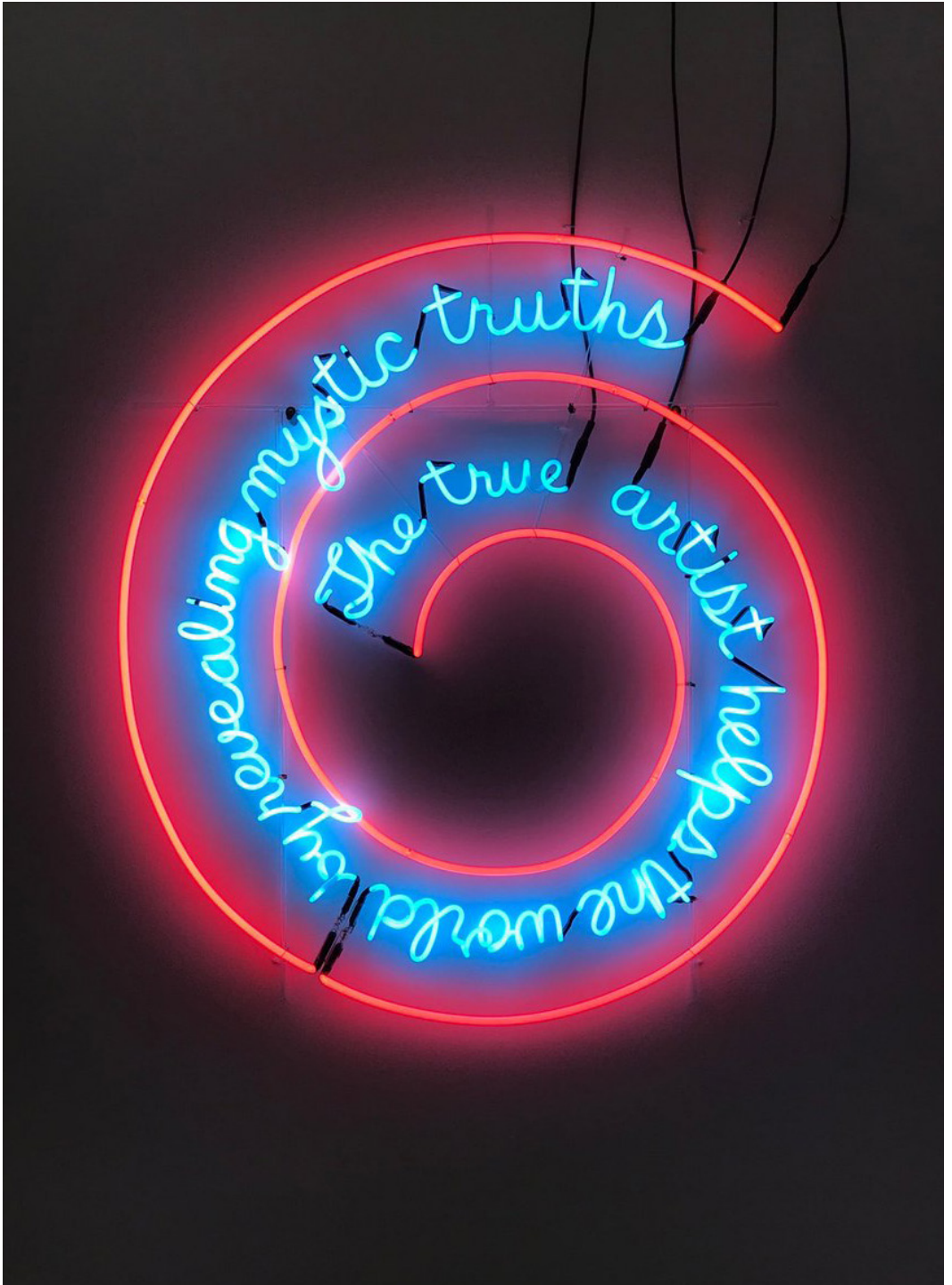
Bruce Nauman**The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths**
1967

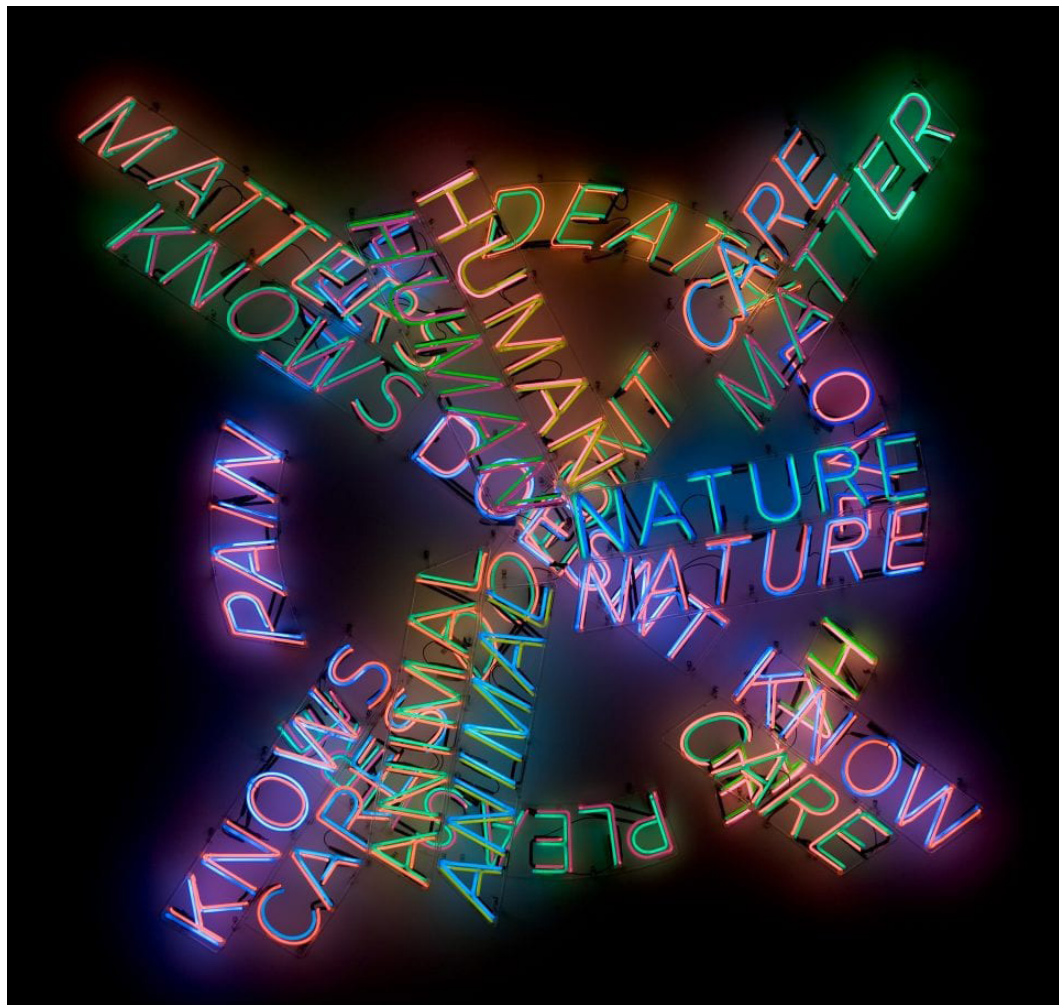
Bruce Nauman in *The true Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths* uses mediums of mass culture/ the accessible and/or the approachable aiming to bring a conversation previously only concerned with the high culture elite, such as the role and function of art and the artist in society, to a wider audience. The artwork was originally hung in his studio's storefront like just other neon signage, and by placing the artwork in the public view and using a readily understood form of communication, Nauman lets everyone ask and answer the question themselves. The artwork is constructed in a manner that it forces the viewer to read it out loud to comprehend what it states, and to see if they believe it.

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Bruce Nauman

Human Nature/Life Death/Knows Doesn't Know

1983

INSERT TEXT HERE

The artwork features three pairs of words, with antithetical connotations - love and death, love and hate, and pleasure and pain and in the centre human, animal and nature are repeated in stacks of two. Each word blinks independently over a period of time displaying a wide variety of all possible permutations. The juxtaposed colours produce an optical illusion creating a jarring, visceral effect. In the artwork, Nauman highlights the inability of language to deliver stable, uniform or fixed set of meanings, attempting to question the truth, especially in the public realm.



Barbara Kruger

I shop therefore I am
1987

K R

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Barbara Kruger's artwork *I shop therefore I am* challenges the notion of how identity is constructed in a consumer driven society through acts of consumption. The catchphrase is borrowed from the 17th century French philosopher Rene Descartes "I think therefore I am" meaning ones capability of thinking or any form of thought justifies a philosophical proof of their existence.

I shop therefore I am addresses and associates itself with the criticism of modern society that is invested in replacing their own self-worth with materialistic objects. The artwork juxtaposes contrasting statements to imply that the society is no longer defined by cerebral abilities or thought but by what they own. In the artwork Kruger expresses her concern for a society that has drifted too far away from the fundamentals and has transformed into a plastic society, becoming more about what they have rather than who they are.

G

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**ANYTHING CAN BE ART.
ART IS THE RELATIONS BETWEEN
RELATIONS, NOT THE RELATIONS
BETWEEN OBJECTS.**

JOSEPH KOSUTH

MAKE
ROOM
FOR
TEXT

RUND
OGRU
ND OG
RUN

W

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Christopher Wool

Untitled

1990

A series of words RUN DOG RUN, rendered in a strict four-by-four grid, plain stencilled forms rendered in black enamel against a white backdrop and spelled out in large 2-feet high black letters, their scale and arrangement makes them almost unreadable. The rigid geometric arrangement forces the words to become broken up and disjointed, rendering them difficult to read. Wool forces the viewer to abandon their conventional comprehension of language and question the fundamental nature of understanding more widely. With the abandonment of conventional syntax, the viewer is then obliged to focus attention on each individual letter, and decide whether, and how, it has a relationship to its neighbour or else new words and sentences are formed out of the old ones; RUN DOG RUN DOG RUN, becomes RUND OGRU NDOG RUN. Wool's paintings combine overt visual clarity with deliberate semantic deformation.

**THIS
IS
NOT
ORI
GINAL**



Ed Ruscha

Pay Nothing Until April
2003

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The phrase “pay nothing until April” echoes the language of advertising, where customers are encouraged to commit to a product now but not pay for it until a later date. The phrase “pay nothing until April” stands for the advertisement lingo, where customers are supposed to commit to a product, but pay for it later. That how by the time April’s heat takes over, people would want to be in the mountains, therefore pushing an advertisement agenda. The text and the background appear to be inharmonious with each other, forcing the viewer to derive some explicable meaning of it all. One may even argue if this may be perceived as climate change artwork, where perhaps paying later in April is not ideal as climate change is only speeding up with every passing second, so by the time April comes, it’ll be too late. So it is better to pay now and be responsible, than give in to capitalist agendas and offers.

He said of the project, *“it’s not a celebration of nature. I’m not trying to show beauty. It’s more like I’m painting ideas of ideas of mountains.[...] Mountains like this were only ever a dream to me.”*

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TEXT FOR THE SAKE OF TEXT

Ed Ruscha

Boss

1961

Boss was a part of a long series of word paintings created by Edward Ruscha. Each painting featured a word with strong connotations and visual impact on a single canvas. Ruscha focussed on the linguistic significance, the multiplicity of meaning attached to the word Boss- it meant an employer, a term for something cool, and a brand of working clothes. The artwork is a part of a larger conversation that encourages the viewer to consider all the subconscious connotations of the word by expanding to an exploration of the subconscious meanings hidden in all forms of language. Boss lettered in clear typography with thick layers of oil paint and heavy colours giving the artwork a heavy visual weight. The artwork has a comedic value to it as well by emphasising a word so mundane on a pedestal and turning the mundane into something thought-provoking.



B

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Erica Baum

Enfold

2013

"Do we see them or do we read them? If we choose to read them, how should we read? Across the fold? Through it? Around it? If we choose to look at Baum's pictures, how should we see them? As artistic photographs? Documentation? Text art?"

- Kenneth Goldsmith

The artwork draws a heavy take on the obsolescence of language. The folded flap ensures that while text written must carry potential meaning, it cannot be understood. And in that way it forms newer meaning.

U

M

a wave would be heard
to enfold the notes
spraying its foam
music. I grew
my thing
struck
in

.

THIS PAGE

[REDACTED]

IS NOT

AVAILABLE

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IN YOUR

[REDACTED]

LOCATION

[REDACTED]



**PROTECT ME FROM
WHAT I WANT**

Jenny Holzer

Protect Me From What I Want
1994

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A pithy, almost reactionary statement for our time, acknowledging a certain overindulgence, an excess. What we want is simply too much. Protect Me From What I Want is a statement that has multiple meanings and one such obvious meaning is consumerism- referring to a fast paced desire driven society where immediate gratification is key with no understanding of how our wants/actions would impact us in the long run. Problematic power of personal desire. Exploring the value of words in their visual representation as well as semantic content, Holzer's art targets the individual desire in humans, and its ultimate self-sabotaging nature. The want of the people is much beyond rationality, and even problematic.

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*I will not make any more boring art.
I will not make any more boring art.
I will not make any more boring art.
I will not make any more boring art.
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I will not make any more boring art.
I will not make any more boring art.*

John Baldessari

I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art

1971

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I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art was not physically made by John Baldessari but it was instructed by him. The artwork was initially called a "*punishment piece*" by the artist in an attempt to make it "*instructive for others*" and acted as a pedagogical tool. John Baldessari asked student volunteers to write the phrase on the walls of an art gallery. While the repetitive, mundane exercise of re-writing a phrase served as a means to instill an important value in the students, it also conflicted with the instruction itself to not make boring art and actually put it on the same walls usually reserved for painting.

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Joseph Kosuth

Four Colours Four Words

1966

His neon sign explores the tautology in art. They're in rearticulation of their visual selves. Kosuth's artwork states exactly what it is seen to be, and is therefore completely analytical, almost mathematical representation of art. Kosuth's neon sign states the truth and offers nothing about any other information, nor do they signify any other fact with their presence, rather they just are as they seem. It is in competition with nuances, and stands stoically on clarity.

FOUR COLORS FOUR WORDS

**THE IDEA BECOMES A MACHINE
THAT MAKES THE ART.**

SOL LEWITT



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Lawrence Weiner
Inherent Innate Tensions
2009

The artwork is a part of an exhibition that covers interior architectures of historic or cutting edge spaces with stencilled texts in Weiner's signature font and colour tones. Weiner triggers alternative modes of seeing and looking by implanting particles of ideas into the viewer through the use of subliminal, witty language, grand scale, and captivating visuals. The artwork based on his Statement of Intent featuring three principles that suggest *"the artist may construct the piece; the piece may be fabricated; the piece need not be built"*— subverts the materialistic essence and conceptual value of the artwork.

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Mel Bochner
Obliterate
2018

Bochner visually plays with the word obliterate by distorting its repetition and serving it to the apt meaning of the word itself. He also explores the tautology in art as the work states exactly what it is. Obliterate carries undertones of careful and crafty manipulation.

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Mel Bochner
BLAH BLAH BLAH
2008

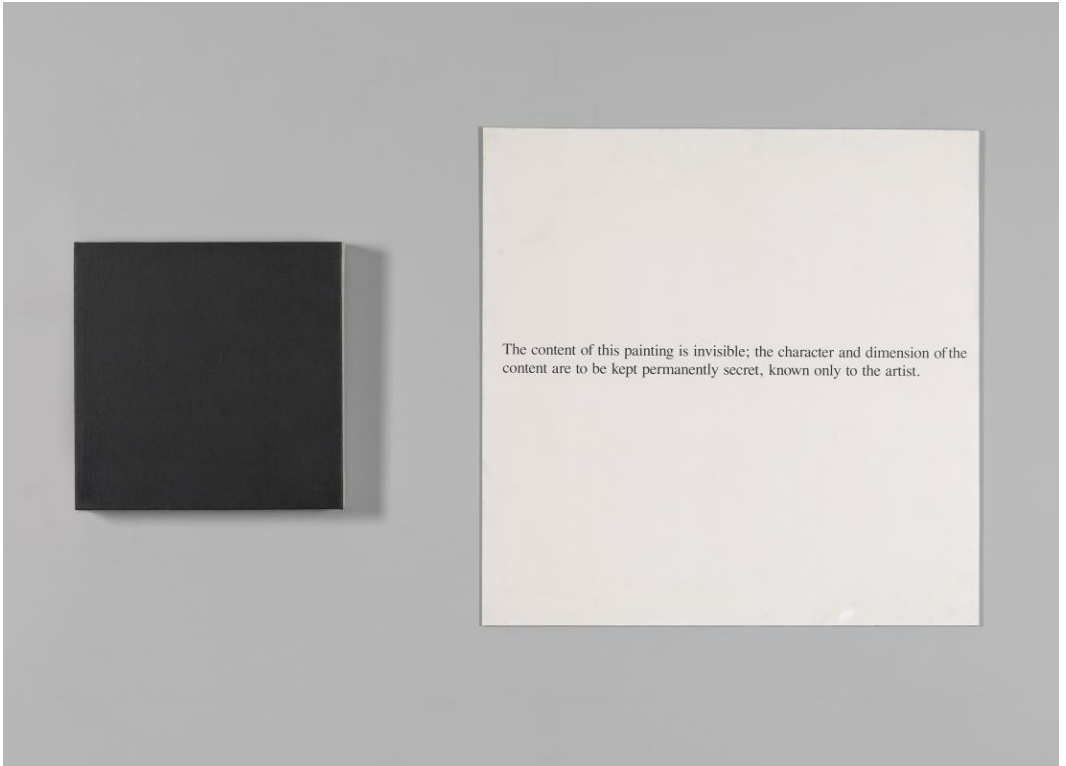
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Bochner explains, *"We live in a world that is oversaturated with empty language—small talk, tweets, texts, leet speak, chit-chat, pop-up ads, telephone-answering messages."*

The artwork explores the multiplicity of meaning in language. Bochner emphasises that the world is now surrounded by hollow sounds for language in many forms, that ultimately stands up to the phonetic value of Blah Blah Blah. While Blah Blah Blah may be meaningless in some cases, it may even signify a certain intimacy of two or more people's understanding of each other, where the use of blah blah blah may fill in for a failed articulation in the form of words, but it is understood by the listener as they know each other well.







Mel Ramsden

Secret Painting

1967

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A painting that we are led to believe exists, a text assuring us it exists and an overpainting that takes the form of a monochrome. Secret painting emphasises the shift from representation of objects to an evocation of their presence and the heightened awareness of the viewers act of looking. The artwork plays on the mechanism of representation rather than the thing being represented, demanding the viewers imagination into the void and becomes more about an experience rather than the object itself.

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Pentagram
Tribeca Festival
2021

SEEN.

Pentagram developed new branding for the 2021 Tribeca Festival, which celebrates the spirit of the city, and invites New Yorkers back to the party after the pandemic lockdown. The graphics are festive and joyful, also signifying that the festival now extends beyond film. The new name widens the scale and focus of the festival to include TV, art, comedy, talks, games, podcasts, immersive experiences and more, including Tribeca At Home, a series of virtual happenings. The typographical approach take by Pentagram is soulful and moves and dances in the spirit of people coming together.

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