

Art + Text Intro Pt 2

Continued...

Shirin Neshat, «*Allegiance with Wakefulness*», 1993



Shirin Neshat is an Iranian-American artist living and working in NY. She is known for her films, video and photographic work.

In several early bodies of work (*Women of Allah, Unveiled*) she explored themes of femininity under the current political conditions in Iran, in relation to Islamic fundamentalism, after a return trip to Iran which provided a stark contrast to her experience there growing up (pre-revolution).

These works depict portraits and body parts of women inscribed with Persian calligraphy

Several of her video / film works include sound/language/singing as a device to explore similar themes (masculine/ feminine, and the conditions for women in contemporary Islamic societies

Susan Hiller, *Witness*, 2000

Susan Hiller is another artist whose work I am in awe of. I often talk about her work in the context of courses I teach on Art and the Archive, but I think it fits here as well, as text and language show up in a lot of her work. But she also creates archives (she was originally educated as an anthropologist)

This work, *Witness*, is a sound installation (this shows it installed recently at the Tate) in which she investigated UFO sightings. She interviewed dozens of people who believed they had seen UFO's, and each of the 'stars' or 'cosmic bodies' in this installation is actually a microphone playing an individual story, so when you walk through the space you hear a cacophony of stories, or you can stay with one and hear it individually.

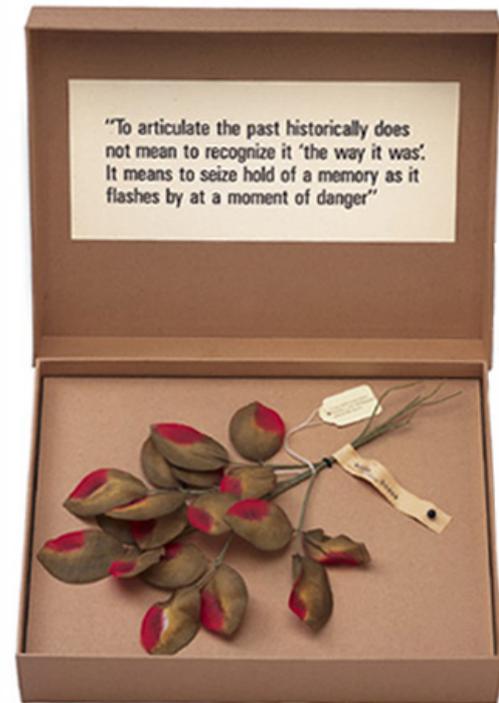
Supposedly this relates to a piece she made in the 1970's where she recorded people recounting their dreams...



Susan Hiller, *Witness*, 2000, four hundred speakers, audio tracks, wires, lights. Installation view, 2011. Photo: Sam Drake.

Susan Hiller, *The Freud Museum*, 1991-96

This is an earlier work of Hiller's in which she worked with the Freud museum in Vienna to create a museum display of vitrines, fitted with personal artifacts to mimic a 'real' museological display (but instead relates it to Freudian psychoanalysis...



Sophie Calle, *The Hotel*, 1981



Sophie Calle is a French artist who deals with storytelling in her work. She mostly uses photos and text, but also video and books etc. The work is often autobiographical (or is meant to seem that way) and the performative elements of her work bleed heavily into her own life so that you often don't know where the work begins and ends.

One of her best known works began with an encounter with a stranger in Paris 2x in one day, so she decided to follow him and it took her to Venice – she documented this and made it into a work (*Suite Venitienne*, 1979). *L'Hotel* was a work in which Calle got a job as a chamber maid in a Venice hotel and she would go through people's things and write about and photograph it all...

She also had her mother hire a private detective to follow her and made that into a work (*The Shadow*, 1981).

Sophie Calle, *Take Care of Yourself*, 2007

This is an installation view of a recent work of Calle's that she showed in the 2007 Venice Biennale.

It allegedly begins with a break-up letter her ex-lover sent her via email. She took this letter to dozens of women with different professions and asks them to interpret or respond to the letter, and she created a large-scale installation work including portraits of women with the letter, video works, writing, and various 'documents' created by the women based on what they do (for example, a copy editor corrects it for spelling and grammar, etc.)...



Christos Dikeakos, *Gigeyt (Patullo Bridge)*, 1991-93



This Christos Dikeakos work is a landscape photograph in the Greater Vancouver Area with a piece of glass laid over the photo with sandblasted text including the Aboriginal name for the place, and the flora and fauna that were once found in that spot before it was settled. Dikeakos is a Vancouver-based photographer who has been working since the 1960's.

Ian Wallace, *The Idea of the University*, 1990



You have all heard of Ian Wallace I'm sure. His show at the VAG is a comprehensive survey of his work and he was engaged with text in his work in various ways. In this work, the idea of text/language/the academy is used as a subject for the work...

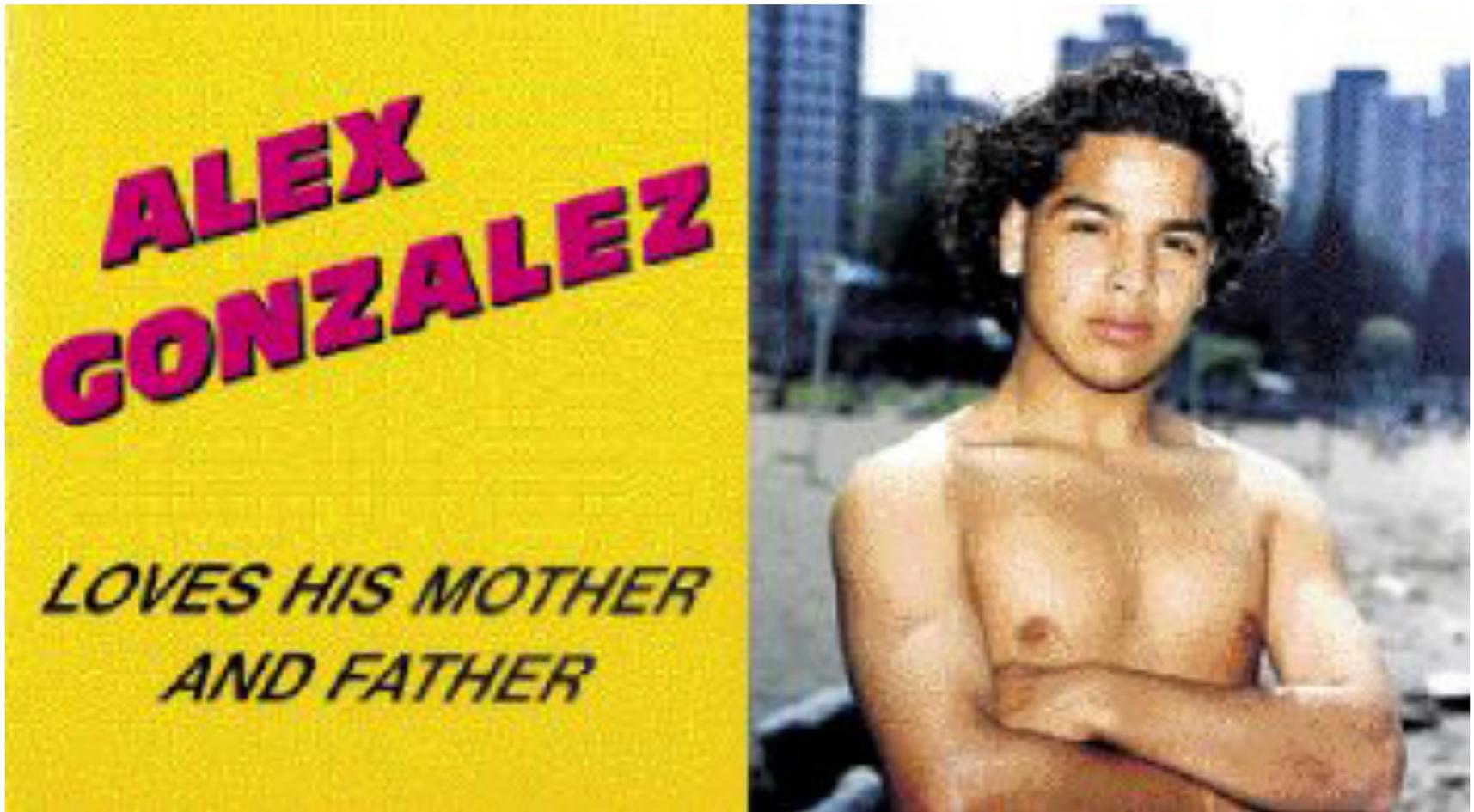
Ian Wallace, *Valencia*, 1990



This is one of his ongoing *Hotel Series* works in which he documents his portable studio when staying at hotels while he travels.

This one depicts a place he stays in Valencia, Spain, and includes an image of a book as well as the trappings of the photograph – it is self-referential (the making of the work) but also points to a larger context of theory/ideas through the text, and evokes the idea of the artist as a traveler/flaneur...

Ken Lum, *Alex Gonzales*, 1990



Ken Lum, *Jim and Susan's Motel*, 2000



Ken Lum was born and raised in Vancouver and lived here until he moved to Philadelphia last year for an academic appointment. (I was fortunate to work with Ken as my grad supervisor at UBC.)

Some of you may have seen his retrospective at the VAG last year.

He has worked with text in various ways for most of his career. The first work (before this) is an early example – when he took portraits of people and created a sign (riffing off of real estate ads and commercial signage).

This work plays with the home-made locally owned shop signage that may contain a personal or political message.

His interest in blending the personal/ idiosyncratic with the commercial shows up in many of his works...

Ken Lum, *You Don't Love Me*, 1994



**You don't love me
You've never
loved me!
When have you ever
loved me?
When have you ever
given a shit
about me?!**

Ken Lum, *Monument to East Van*, 2010



Anyone living in or near Vancouver has likely seen this Lum work. It was part of the 'Mapping and Marking' commissions for public art made by the city during the Olympics.

It takes the ubiquitous graffiti motif that has been used around Vancouver for decades, and whose origins are unclear. Lum recalls seeing this as a child, and it has become a symbol of 'East Van Pride' and has been co-opted by various local gangs (Lum recalls the 'Clark Park Gang' from his youth).

Curiously this work has created a lot of controversy since it was erected... If you are curious look it up online, there is an online forum with lots of arguments around the work...

Gillian Wearing, *Signs that say what you want them to say, not what somebody else wants them to say*, 1992-93



Gillian Wearing comes out of London in the late 1980's and rose to prominence next to the likes of Damian Hirst, Tracy Emin, and the rest of the group of artists known as the 'YBA's' (Young British Artists – not so young now, but the name stuck...) Much of her work explores the idea of the individual within society, and often pushes the limits of what she asks/takes from her subject, often under the guise of some sort of collaborative gesture, but her authorship is always decidedly present.

This work "*Signs...*" (for short) was a large series in which she positioned herself in a park in London and photographed strangers holding signs that said what they wanted them to say (literally)...

Gillian Wearing, *Signs that say what you want them to say, not what somebody else wants them to say*, 1992-93



Fiona Banner

Fiona Banner (also known as a YBA) is known for her use of text in two ways.

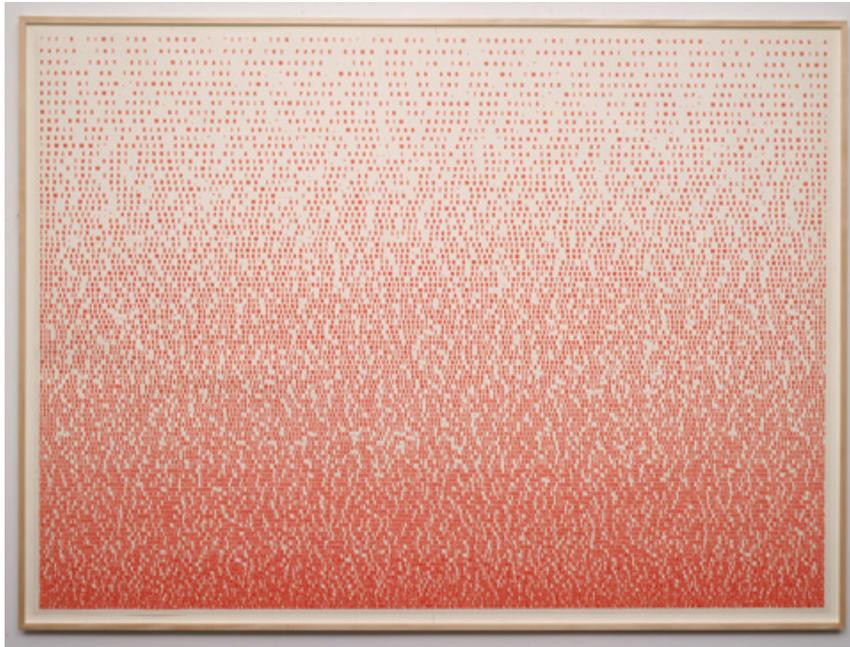
The first is the sculptural work in which she created 3-D letters, and in this case large sculptures of punctuation marks.

The second, for her large text works in which she will watch a scene or a whole film and write out what is happening while she watches the film and turn it into a text work.

The next page has an image of the text describing a chase scene from *Point Break*...



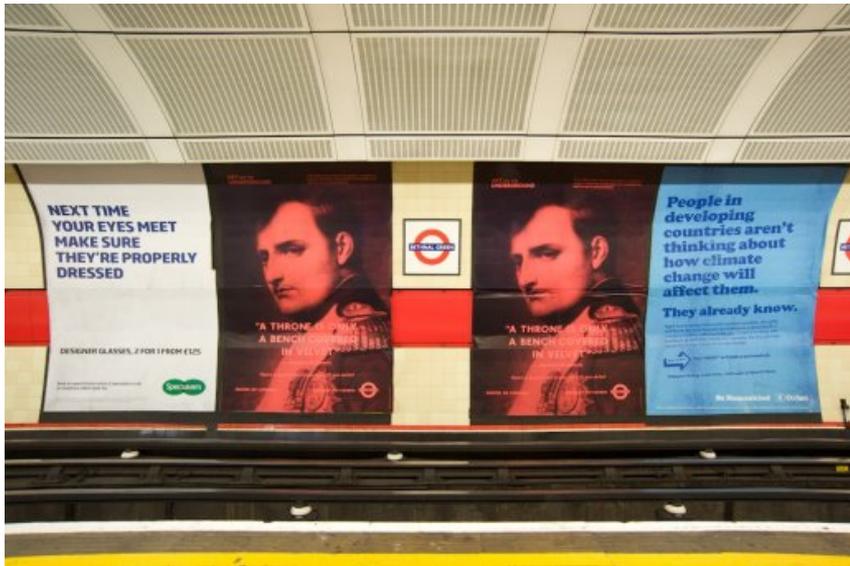
Fiona Banner, *Concrete Art*, and *Break Point* (1998)



Bob and Roberta Smith, Hijack Reality: Let 100,000 Kunstvereine Bloom!'



Jeremy Deller, *What is the city but the people?*, 2009

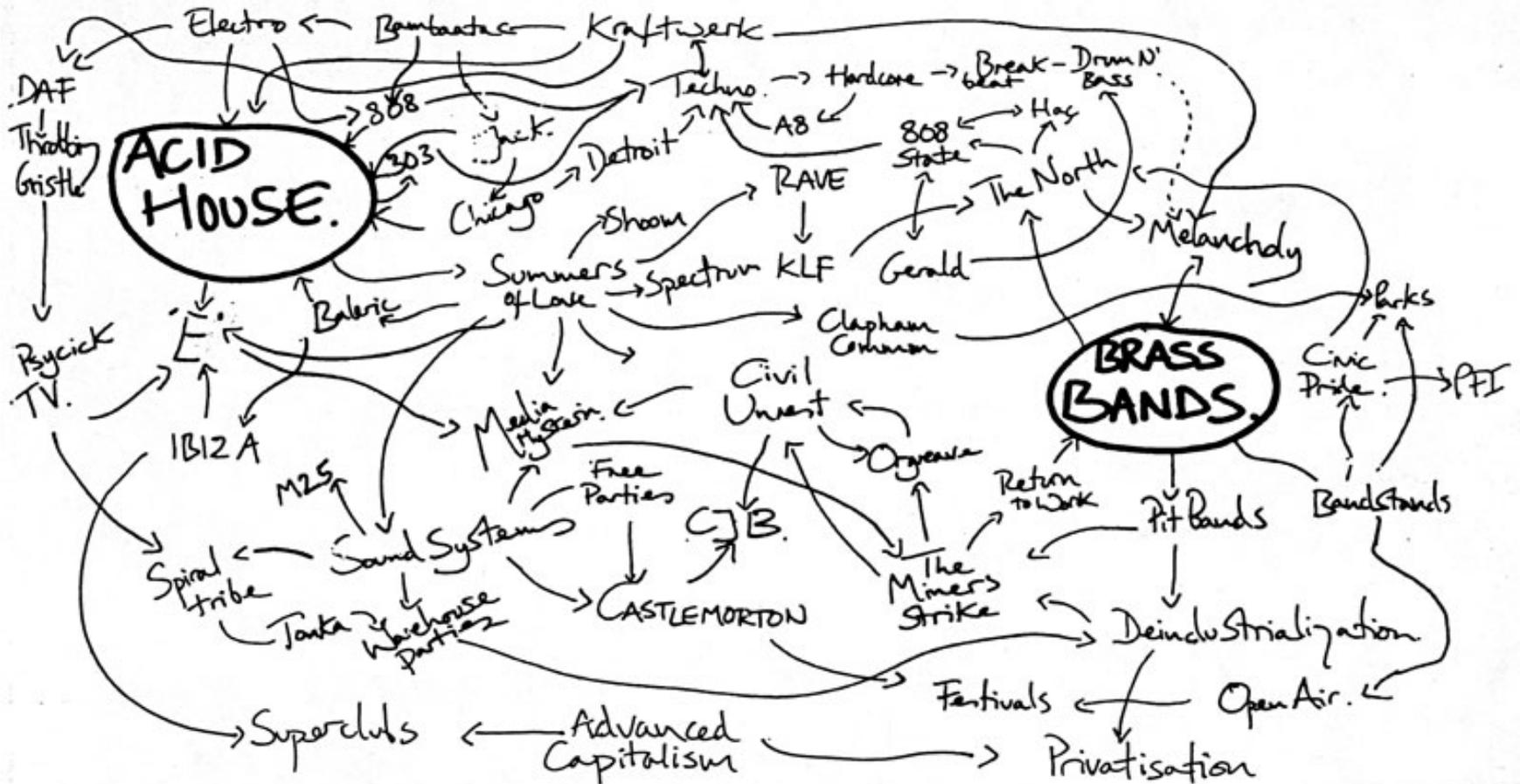


Jeremy Deller is another UK artist who is best known for his performative / interventions / social practice, as well as his posters, video and book works.

His best known work is a recreation (using hired actors) of the UK Battle of Orgreave which occurred during the 1984 miner's strike.

This work is an advertisement for an intervention/public work he did in 2009 in the London Tube. He created a passport-sized book of quotes, and at random times the staff would use the quotes in their daily communications with customers (for example, the conductor would read one out over the loudspeaker instead of a regular announcement, etc...)

Jeremy Deller, *The History of the World, 1997-2004*



Martin Creed, *Work No. 755*, 2007



Martin Creed (Scottish born, lives in London) uses words in many of his works. He has a band and he explores language and the idea of words in many of his songs.

He uses numbers (not in order) instead of titles.

He is well known for many things, including his sense of humour. He has made quite a few neon works that either involve quotes that are taken out of context in order to make them ambiguous, or played with to create a visual pun or a contradiction...

The next page shows a work you will likely have seen installed atop the Rennie Collection. This version is installed in Detroit – often this work is placed in troubled neighbourhoods to highlight the contradictions, or possible range of interpretations based on the context and the viewer...

Martin Creed, *Work No. 560*, 2007



Doug Aitkin, *99c Dreams*, 2007



Doug Aitken is a multi-media artist known for his media-rich installations and his work with video, sound, sculpture and neon (text!)

Most of his work engages in the construction of narrative, working with popular culture, and cultural critique... His text works are often a piece of the larger whole...

Doug Aitkin, *Star*, 2007



Ron Terada, *Jeopardy paintings*, 1999



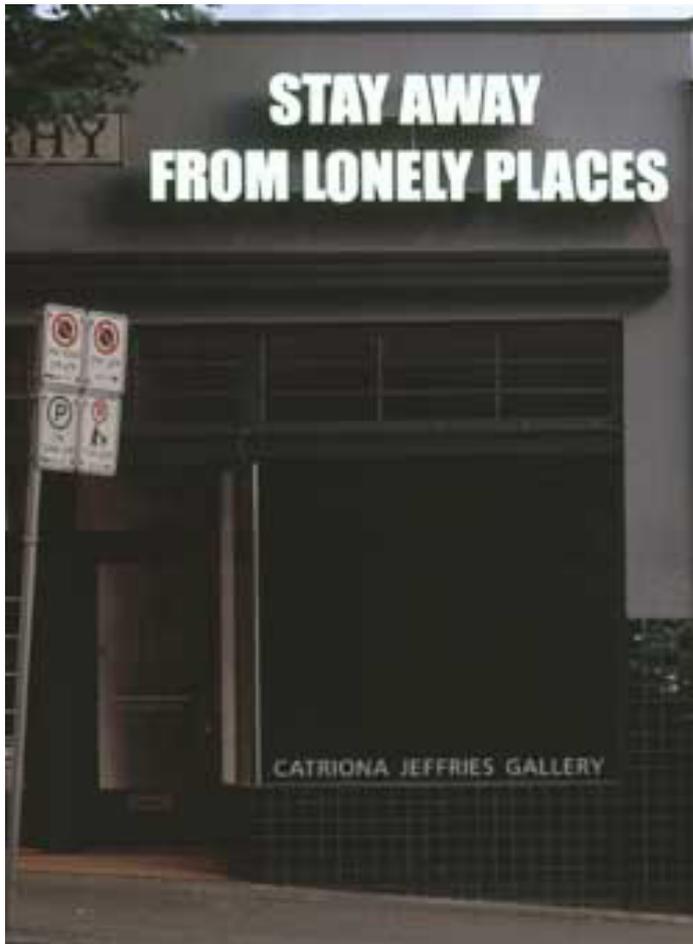
Terada is a local Vancouver artist – he graduated from Emily Carr in 1992, and still works in Vancouver.

Most of his work involves text, and deals with themes from popular culture.

This work is from his *Jeopardy Paintings* series, which depict the questions (in the form of answers) to a set of Jeopardy clues. He never provides the answer (question), but it alludes to various moments in culture/pop culture.

The paintings are flocked raw canvas where you see colour, and 'inside; the text is raw canvas – he plays with reversal here, as does Jeopardy...

Ron Terada, *Stay Away from Lonely Places*, 2005



This text comes from a Willie Nelson song – and is now the only visible signage outside Catriona Jeffries' East Vancouver Gallery...

Ron Terada, Public Art, 2005



This was a rather controversial work Terada had made and installed facing the US in Windsor Ontario. The sign was constructed by a commercial company who makes signage for the city. He was asked to take it down as it was offensive to someone / those on the US side...

Steven Shearer, *Poems*, 2005



Graduating from Emily Carr at the same time as Terada, Steven Shearer is known for his work looking at the intersection between the culture of music, and suburban male youth culture. Heavy Metal shows up a lot in his work as either subject or reference.

These works were originally made as drawings, then a series of posters (and later one was a large sign outside the Canadian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale when he represented Canada in 2009). They take the lyrics to heavy metal songs (mostly Morbid Angel, and Cradle of Filth) and creates these stark, dark visual poems out of them...

Steven Shearer (early 1990's – made in art school as a response to feeling his own suburban culture was not considered a decent topic to make art about...)

SORRY STEVE, WHEN WE TALK
ABOUT CELEBRATING CULTURAL
DIVERSITY WE DON'T MEAN
YOURS ~~WE DON'T MEAN YOURS~~
~~WE DON'T MEAN YOURS~~

Raymond Pettibon, Black Flag Poster, c. 1984



Pettibon started as an untrained artist, making posters for Black Flag (his brother was a member) and then started doing album cover art and gig posters for them.

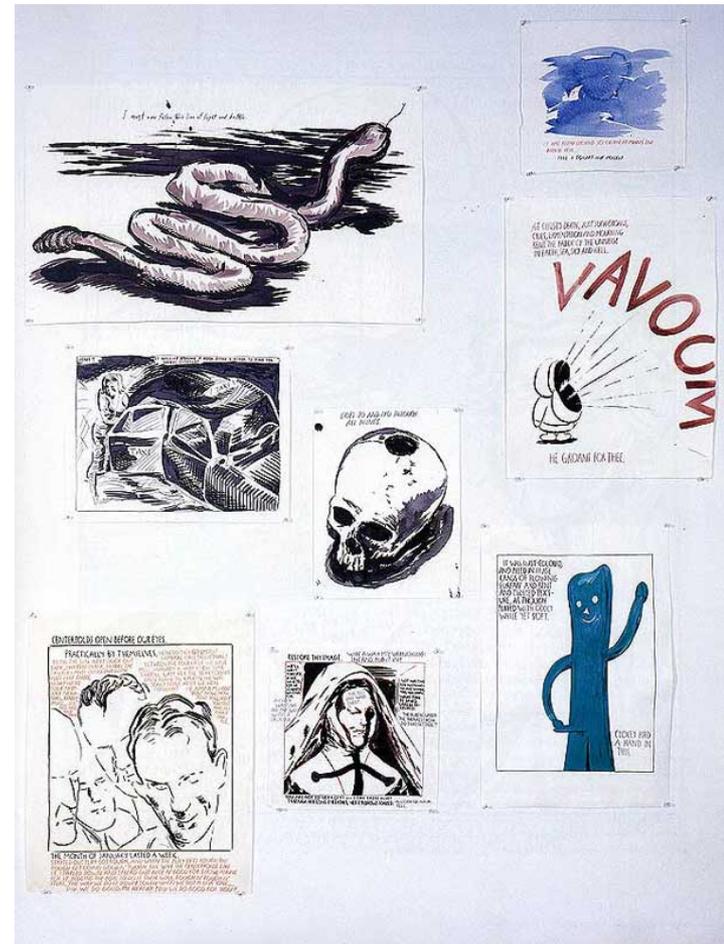
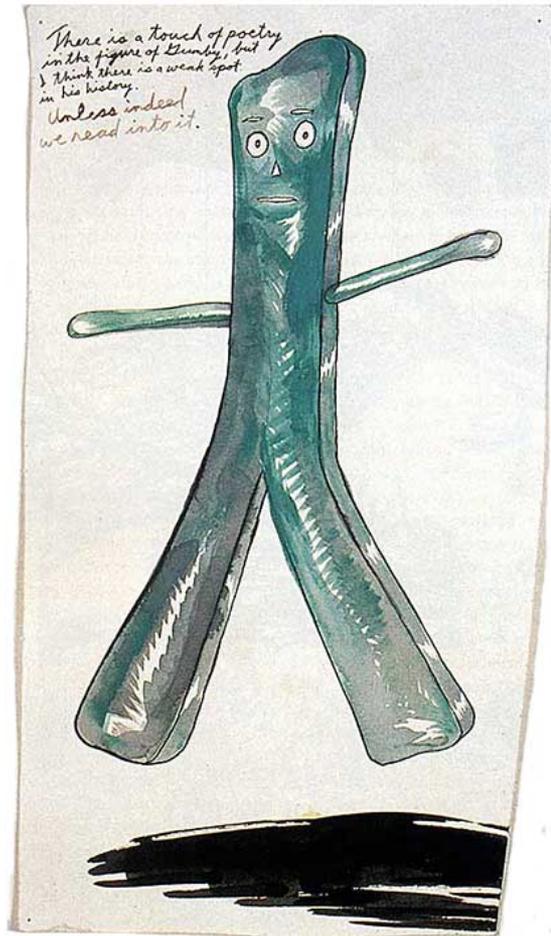
He was born in Arizona and works in LA.

He started showing his work, never doing anything larger than 11x14 works on paper (ink drawings mostly), and for the most part continues that to this day. Later in the 1980's he did the cover for Sonic Youth's *Goo* album.

He started making larger, more ambitious installations where he would paint on the gallery walls, and creating big clusters of drawings.

His work is always semi-political, referencing things like film noir, sports heroes, religious iconography and cartoons, twisting the expected narratives of what is depicted...

Raymond Pettibon, *No Title, There is a touch of poetry...*, 1997-2001



Kay Rosen, *Leak*, 1997



Kay Rosen is a NY based artist who works entirely with text.

She works with phonetics, word associations, visual puns, double meanings, and so on.

Sometimes she will use fragments of words, and will utilize the gallery space to set up the text as an installation relying on its placement in the gallery (as you see here)...

Kay Rosen, *Blurred*, 2004



Glen Ligon, *Negro Sunshine*, 2004



Glenn Ligon is an American artist who often deals with issues of identity, sexuality, language, desire and race through text-based works.

This work takes text from a Gertrude Stein novel (*Three Lives*, 1909) and renders them in white neon, then paints the face of the letters out in black so the glow can only come from behind.

The Atlas Group, *My Neck is Thinner than a Hair*, 2010



I will end with the Atlas Group. This is another fake collaboration – it is really the artist Walid Raad.

The Atlas Group was allegedly a group formed in 1999 to examine, research and document the contemporary history of Lebanon, in particular relating to issues and occurrences around the civil war.

Raad also makes other work under his own name, but under the Atlas Group he has created an extensive archive of false documents to create a sense of the experiences that everyday people would have gone through.

It is often presented to a western audience (Raad works in NY – teaches at the Cooper Union), which underscores for the viewer the sense of confusion experienced by an outsider and the ignorance that westerners may have about the east.

<http://www.theatlasgroup.org>

That is all for now... I hope this gives you a good starting point from which to begin to think about art and text. It should also give you some idea of which artists you find interesting and may want to explore more in your presentations...