

Jenny Holzer *Inflammatory Essays*

Jenny Holzer's *Inflammatory Essays* (1979–82) consist of 24 short texts, each a hundred words long, arranged in twenty lines. They are printed in Times Roman Bold Italic and each sheet is 17 x 17 inches.

Holzer originally pasted them in the streets of Manhattan, selecting each location according to the nature of each specific message. Every week she hung new posters, printed in different colors each time, so passer-bys would know they had been changed. For the series, Holzer studied the writings of the likes of Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, Karl Marx and Emma Goldman, but also crackpot writings and religious fanatics. While these references are long gone, this language has resurfaced broadly in recent years, moving more and more into the political mainstream.

The texts appeared anonymously in public space, their perfect square and colorful paper in combination with the formatted text made them carefully seductive. Holzer confronts the reader directly with the content, their random appearance gives no guideline for contextualization, leaving the reader with the responsibility to take a position towards the lines and the furor contained.

At Oracle, the *Inflammatory Essays* are again shown in public space, exposing them to comments and responses.