I Want to Go to the Future Please: Jenny Holzer and the End of a Century

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Figure 1.1

from Truisms (1977–79), 1977
Offset poster
34.75 x 22.9 in. / 88.3 x 58.1 cm
Installation: New York, 1977
© 1977 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Jenny Holzer

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Figure 1.2

*Blue Room*, 1975
Acrylic wash over latex paint
Dimensions unknown
© 1975 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Figure 1.3

_Pigeon Lines, 1975_

Bread, pigeons

Installation: Providence, Rhode Island, USA

© 1975 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Figure 1.4

*Beach Carpet*, 1975
Acrylic on cotton
600 ft. / 182.9 m
© 1975 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Two bodies run together, fuse, and then vanish.
Figure 2.1

from *Truisms* (1977–79), 1977
Offset poster
24 x 18 in. / 61 x 45.7 cm
Installation: New York, 1977
© 1977 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Jenny Holzer
Figure 2.2

*Manifesto Show*, with Colen Fitzgibbon and Collaborative Projects, 1979
Installation: 5 Bleecker Street, New York
© 1979 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Courtesy: Jenny Holzer / Art Resource, NY
DON'T TALK DOWN TO ME. DON'T BE POLITE TO ME. DON'T TRY TO MAKE ME FEEL NICE. DON'T RELAX. I'LL CUT THE SMILE OFF YOUR FACE. YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. YOU THINK I'M AFRAID TO REACT. THE JOKE'S ON YOU. I'M BIDDING MY TIME, LOOKING FOR THE SPOT. YOU THINK NO ONE CAN REACH YOU, NO ONE CAN HAVE WHAT YOU HAVE. I'VE BEEN PLANNING WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING. I'VE BEEN SAVING WHILE YOU'RE SPENDING. THE GAME IS ALMOST OVER SO IT'S TIME YOU ACKNOWLEDGE ME. DO YOU WANT TO FALL NOT EVER KNOWING WHO TOOK YOU?

Figure 2.3

from Inflammatory Essays
Offset poster
17 x 17 in. / 43.2 x 43.2 cm
Installation: New York, c. 1979-82
© 1979 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
AFTER DARK IT’S A RELIEF TO SEE A GIRL WALKING TOWARD OR BEHIND YOU. THEN YOU’RE MUCH LESS LIKELY TO BE ASSAULTED.

Figure 2.4

*Living: After dark it’s a relief to see a girl..., 1981*
Cast-bronze plaque
5 x 10 in. / 12.7 x 25.4 cm
Text: *Living*, 1980-82
© 1981 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Figure 2.5

from *Truisms* (1977–79), 1978
Photostats, audio tape, posters (partially destroyed)
Installation: Franklin Furnace, New York, 1978
© 1978 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Mike Glier
Figure 2.6

from Truism (1977–79), 1979
Photostats and audiotaape
© 1979 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Jenny Holzer
Figure 2.7

color photostats and audiotape
8’ x 36”

Text: *Truisms*, 1977–79


© Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

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Figure 3.1

Photograph of the members of The Offices of Fend Fitzgibbon, Holzer, Nadin, Prince & Winters

From left to right: Richard Prince, Jenny Holzer, Coleen Fitzgibbon, Peter Fend, Peter Nadin, and Robin Winters
Figure 3.2

Business card of *The Offices of Fend, Fitzgibbon, Holzer, Nadin, Prince & Winters*
Figure 4.1

*Documenta 8*, 1987
2 LED signs, 2 sarcophagi
Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany
© 1987 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Figure 4.2

© 1989 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio
“Laments: With only my mind...”, 1989
Red Ankara marble sarcophagus
82 x 30 x 24.4 in. / 208.3 x 76.2 x 61.9 cm
Text: Laments, 1988–89
© 1989 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Courtesy: Jenny Holzer / Art Resource, NY
Photo: Larry Lame
Figure 4.4

© 1989 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio
Figure 4.5

© 1989 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Courtesy: Jenny Holzer / Art Resource, NY
Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio
Messages to the Public
Spectacolor electronic sign
20 x 40 ft.
Text: *Truisms*, 1977–79
Times Square, New York
© Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
PEOPLE GO TO THE RIVER WHERE IT IS LUSH AND MUDDY TO SHOOT CAPTIVES, TO FLOAT OR SINK THEM. SHOTS KILL MEN WHO ALWAYS WANT. SOMEONE IMAGINED OR SAW THEM LEAPING TO SAVAGE THE GOVERNMENT. NOW BODIES DIVE AND GLIDE IN THE WATER, SCARING FRIENDS OR MAKING THEM FURIOUS.

Figure 4.7
© 1987 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Courtesy: Jenny Holzer / Art Resource, NY
Photo: Michael Tropea
Gran Fury designed December-January 1988-89 poster/calendar of events for The Kitchen
Courtesy of The Kitchen
Figure 4.9

Gran Fury designed December-January 1988-89 poster/calendar of events for The Kitchen

Courtesy of The Kitchen
Figure 4.10

*Sign on a Truck*, 1984
Mobile 2000 video control system
161.5 x 216.5 in. / 410.2 x 549.9 cm, screen
Text: *Survival*, 1983–85
Site view: Grand Army Plaza, New York, 1984
© 1984 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Pelka/Noble
Figure 5.1

Xenon for Florence, 1996
Light projection
Arno River, Palazzo Bargagli, Via de Bardi, Florence, Italy
Text: Arno, 1996
© 1996 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Attilio Maranzano
Figure 5.2

from *War*, 1992
LED signs
112.5 x 10 x 4.5 in. / 285.8 x 25.4 x 11.4 cm, each
Text: *War*, 1992
Kunsthalle Basel
© 1992 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Figure 5.3

*Lustmord*, 1993
Cibachrome print of ink on skin
13 x 20 in. / 33 x 50.8 cm
Text: *Lustmord*, 1993-95
© 1993 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Alan Richardson
Figure 5.4

*Survival: Mothers with reasons to sob...*, 1984
Cast-aluminum plaque
6 x 10 in. / 15.2 x 25.4 cm
Text: *Survival*, 1983-85
© 1984 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
and there's
Miss Strong Arm,
toting her torch
it's another city
going back
the moon one night
past its full
writes signs
vanishing hypnotically
downtown
the towers block massively
at the rail
a man who rests his hands
looks heroic;
he works at night:
going from or to?
I don't know
I hardly know
why I'm on the river
late at night.

IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED.
IT HAD TO HAPPEN.
IT HAPPENED EARLIER. LATER.
NEARER, FARTHER OFF.
IT HAPPENED, BUT NOT TO YOU.
YOU WERE SAVED BECAUSE
YOU WERE THE FIRST.
YOU WERE SAVED BECAUSE
YOU WERE THE LAST.
ALONE, WITH OTHERS.
ON THE RIGHT, THE LEFT.
BECAUSE IT WAS RAINING.
BECAUSE OF THE SHADE.
BECAUSE THE DAY WAS SUNNY.
YOU WERE IN LUCK.
THERE WAS A FOREST.
YOU WERE IN LUCK.
THERE WERE NO TREES.
YOU WERE IN LUCK.
A RAKE, A HOOK, A BEAM, A ROPE.
A JAMS, A TURN, A QUARTER INCH,
AN INSTANT.
YOU WERE IN LUCK.
JUST THEN A STRAW WENT FLOATING BY.
AS A RESULT, BECAUSE,
ALTHOUGH, DESPITE.
WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED
IF A HAND, A FOOT,
WITHIN AN INCH,
A HAIRSBREATH FROM
AN UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE.
SO YOU'RE STILL HERE?
STILL DIZZY FROM ANOTHER DODGE.
CLOSE SHAVE, REPRIEVE?
ONE HOLE IN THE NET
AND YOU SLIPPED THROUGH?

I COULDN'T BE
MORE SHOCKED OR SPEECHLES.
LISTEN.
HOW YOUR HEART POUNDS INSIDE ME.

Figure 5.5
Jenny Holzer contribution to “After the Towers: Nine Artists Imagine a Memorial”
Calvin Tomkins, New Yorker, July 15, 2002
Figure 5.6

For New York City, 2004
Light projection
Hotel Pennsylvania, New York
Presented by Creative Time
© 2004 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Attilio Maranzano
Figure 5.7

For the Guggenheim, 2008
Light projection
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
© 2008 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Annie Tritt
Photo © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation
Figure 5.8

*Xenon for Berlin*, 2001
Light projection
Museumshöfe, Berlin
Text: *Mother and Child*, 1990
© 2001 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Attilio Maranzano
Figure 5.9

For San Diego, 2007
Light projection
Wipeout Beach, La Jolla, California, USA
© 2007 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
Photo: Philipp Scholz Rittermann