

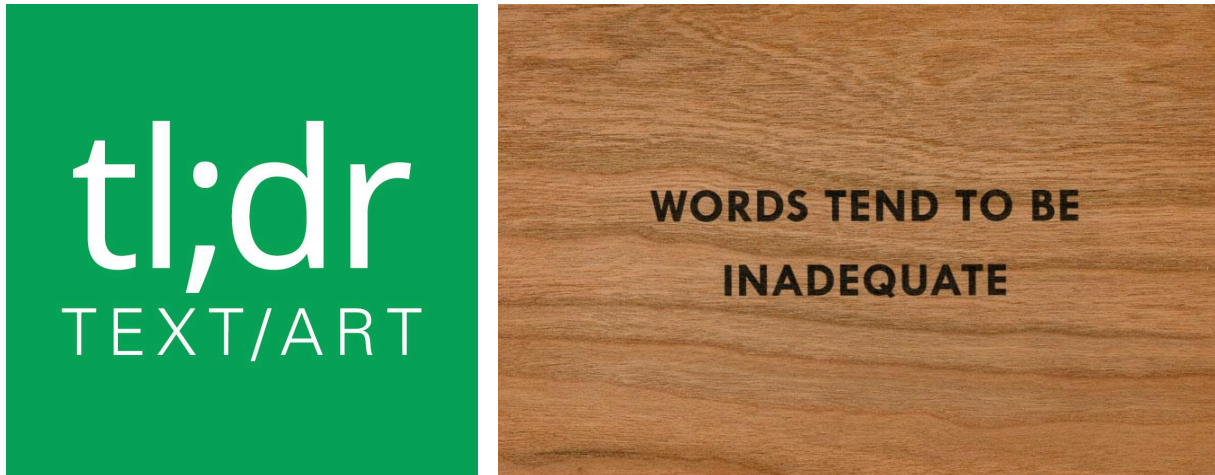
Sullivan Goss

AN AMERICAN GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2025



*Too Long; Didn't Read / Too Long; Don't Read

APRIL 25 - JUNE 23, 2025

OPENING RECEPTION: 1ST THURSDAY, MAY 1ST | FROM 5-8 pm

SANTA BARBARA, CA – Sullivan Goss – An American Gallery is excited to announce *TL;DR: Text / Art* – an exhibition that highlights the exciting and contentious relationship between visual art and the written word. Relationship status: it's complicated. This show brings together a diverse selection of contemporary and historic American artworks that feature text – either as a part of the image, as a series of beautiful shapes, as written (if also artful?) communication, or as slippery signifier – alternating between image and text.

The earliest work in the exhibition by FRANCIS CRISS dates to 1930 and integrates the artist's rendering of stenciled lettering inspired by the synthetic Cubist experiments of Picasso, Braque, and Gris who often collaged newspaper headlines into their painted compositions. This historical example provides a foundation for understanding how artists began to deal with the omnipresence of text in the modern world. With mass media formats like newspapers, billboards, and commercial signage, these Modernists laid the groundwork for how artists would approach the written word in the decades to come.

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For images or other information requests, contact Nathan Vonk at 805.730.1460 or nathan@sullivangoss.com

Among the highlights of the exhibition are a selection of works by two internationally-known artists whose work is central to any discussion of “text art” from the latter twentieth century: ED RUSCHA and JENNY HOLZER. Their works play with the visual language of advertising to comment on society, to conjure poetry, and to critique the strategies that mass media wizards use to seduce and manipulate us. Irony runs rampant, piercing and amusing as it goes.

It Takes One Thousand Masters by LITA ALBUQUERQUE is more straightforward. Uniting image and text, she calls for enlightenment. AMOS KENNEDY, likewise, leverages the power of affordable broadsides to challenge and uplift people’s thinking. He also loves the history and idiosyncrasy of wood type – the way hand drawn and hand carved letter forms look and feel.

Some people just love the shapes of letters – what typographers call letterforms. A cool, mysterious image from 1963 by THOMAS AKAWIE takes the number 8 and convolutes it into an abstract shape. The works of WOSENE WORKE KOSROF, represented by the gallery and recently published in Phaidon’s *Vitamin TXT*, make the forms of Amharic script into all-over abstractions. EMMETT WILLIAMS, artist and concrete poet, weaves together a net of words to make a different kind of abstraction in his work from 1971. That, in turn, relates to UCSB Professor LINDA EKSTROM’s exquisite cut paper works, where so many words are layered on top of each other that abstraction results.

To unite form and function, look to the letterforms of SNEHA SHRESTHA that nod to both Sanskrit and “urban” calligraphy. Likewise, MADELEINE EVE IGNON turns punctuation marks into a painterly and heartfelt expression of emotion. They make writing an art. It is a sensibility doubtless shared by DAVE LEFNER and PATRICIA CHIDLAW, who both love and laboriously render the neon signs of yesteryear. Bay Area artist KIM FROSHIN meets them halfway, letting a slickly lettered ‘57’ emerge from a structure of thickly painted abstraction.

Are these painted words or have the words become images? In NANCY GIFFORD’s *Fall, Falling, Fell*, the slope gets particularly slippery. Fortunately, TRACEY HARRIS’ realistically painted book spines render the difference moot. They’re wonderful either way. Rounding out the exhibition are MARY HEEBNER and JOSEPH GOLDYNE, two important makers of *livres d’artiste* (artist books). These works show that if you want to ensure a happy marriage between images and art, it helps if they have their own space.

ARTISTS INCLUDED IN THE EXHIBITION: Thomas Akawie (1935-2019), Lita Albuquerque, Patricia Chidlaw, Francis Criss (1901-1973), Linda Ekstrom, Kim Froshin, Nancy Gifford, Joseph Goldyne, Tracey Harris, Jenny Holzer, Madeleine Eve Igon, Amos Kennedy, Wosene Worke Kosrof, Dave Lefner, David Ligare, Ed Ruscha, Sneha Shrestha, Emmett Williams (1925-2007)

IMAGE ABOVE: JENNY HOLZER *Truism Postcards [detail]*, 1994 [printed later] 4 x 6 inches | screenprint on wood

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